INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION IN BRISTOL

A STUDY IN DEMOCRACY.

A STUDY IN DEMOCRACY:

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION IN BRISTOL.

BY

EDWARD JACKSON.

"Government and Co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life."—JOHN RUSKIN.

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PREFACE.

IN asking from Co-operators in particular, and social reformers in general, a sympathetic consideration of the democratic evolution herein set forth, it is, perhaps, necessary to explain why I was called upon to undertake the work.

The preparation of a history of the Bristol and District Society was suggested in 1904 by the Greenbank Council, and the educational bodies thereupon referred the matter to the Management Committee, who asked the educational workers to formulate a scheme. By the time the matter could be properly discussed amalgamation proposals were in the air. But meanwhile a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Connolly, Ackerman, Jacques, Mrs. Greenland, and myself, was formed to prepare the details and report. A year went by, and, beyond writing letters to likely individuals for information, nothing was done. Amalgamation took place, and it was seen that the work would need to be of a much more exhaustive nature than was at first supposed.

A meeting of the History Committee was held in September, 1907, when, after considerable discussion as to the future course of procedure, and no definite line of action being decided upon, it was suggested that, subject to the approval of the Educational Finance Committee, the whole matter should be entrusted to me. I took a fortnight to consider, and agreed to undertake the

work, providing the request was fairly unanimous, that the printing and binding of the book should be completed in a Co-operative workshop, and that both paper and binding should be of good, serviceable quality. The request was unanimous, and the terms agreed to, and the writer has now come to the end of his task, not without a sense of having failed to reach the standard he set for himself, but in the hope that what has been here written down may serve to inspire and help his fellows to have faith, and to work for the Co-operative ideal, " Each for All, and All for Each."

I have to acknowledge help received in my researches, amongst others, from Professor G. H. Leonard, M.A., the officials of the Bristol Society, the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and the Co-operative Union; also from Miss Llewelyn Davies (Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild) and Mr. W. M. Bamford (Editor of the *Co-operative News*).

My friends, Mr. A. Thorburn and Mr. H. F. Lane, rendered me valuable assistance and advice in the early stages of proof-reading, and Mr. Vaughan Nash, C.B., kindly suggested additions and modifications which I gladly accepted, as calculated to enhance the usefulness of the work, and, perhaps, interest a larger circle of readers than is usual with Co-operative histories.

To these, and all who have helped me with information and advice, I tender my heartiest thanks, trusting that our joint efforts will not prove to have been altogether fruitless.

EDWARD JACKSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE aim of this book is to give a plain, unvarnished account of the Co-operative movement in Bristol, setting forth all its early vicissitudes, and bearing testimony to the public spirit, the foresight, and the undaunted perseverance of its promoters.

Such a history is a mine of valuable experience, for the ups and downs of this movement, beset as it was from the beginning by manifold hindrances, furnish many useful object-lessons.

We may certainly say on its behalf that it would be difficult to find any movement among the working classes during the last half century which has been either more directly effective in improving the circumstances of those concerned or more influential in training working men for the practical duties of good citizenship as members of the community to which they belong; and special recognition is due to the leading Co-operators for the prominence they have given to educational efforts, and the zeal with which they have supported all educational progress. In this respect they have been the forerunners of the Workers' Educational Association, which is now doing such good work in Bristol, as elsewhere, for the better and higher education of working men.

The value of such educational work can hardly be overrated, because it is on the growing power and influence of an educated democracy, emancipated in

some degree from the rivalries and the selfishness of individualistic competition, and inspired by the sense of our common Christian brotherhood, that we must rest our chief hopes of bettering the lot of the multitudinous poor by securing for them more equal and fairer conditions and opportunities, and thus giving them the prospect of a healthier, purer, and happier life.

Towards this end the Co-operative movement has been and is a truly beneficent pioneering agent, and I am grateful to the Bristol Co-operators for allowing me the privilege of once more taking a small share in their good work for the people by commending this book to the attention of all who care for the uplifting of our national life.



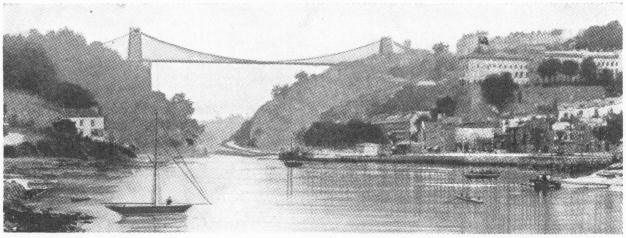
BOOK I.

THE PERSISTENT PRINCIPLE.

Chapter I.—The Mediæval Ideal and Practice.

Chapter II.—Robert Owen, the Prophet.

Chapter III.—Bristol Pioneers and their Methods.



CHAPTER I.

The Mediæval Ideal and Practice.

IN one form or another, throughout the ages, Co-operation has existed between man and man; for the most part, unconscious Co-operation, but none the less real. During the reign of brute force men combined for mutual protection, as well as for individual gain. Our Saxon forefathers, in their "Hams" and "Tuns," co-operated in village communities for political purposes. But more, in domestic matters also, they combined for mutual help and assistance, in case adversity or sickness overtook any of the tribe, each contributing to a common fund for the maintenance and support of the unfortunate.

Centuries afterwards, when commerce became the object of men's cares, the same spirit of co-operation is evidenced in the "Guilds"—combinations of workers in the same industry to maintain the craft and to ensure the weal of the craftsmen.

Individualism, as we know it to-day, had not been born. The course of men's lives in a broad sense was shaped very largely upon the teaching of the Church. The social conscience was permeated with the idea that "no man liveth to himself;" moreover, it was abhorrent to the mediæval mind that individuals should make their own gain from the misfortunes of their brethren.

The taking of interest was expressly condemned, as being opposed to the injunction to "lend, hoping for

nothing gain." The habit of deferring to the Church's ruling for spiritual direction affected men's outlook upon life from a secular point of view also; and, just as there was no toleration for freedom of expression in religious thought, in the same way there was no toleration for freedom of action in trading. As Mr. Francis Fox has well put it, " the latter was as much a social as the former was a religious heresy." Thus the mediæval idea of industry was essentially moral in its conception. In many cases the Guilds themselves had a religious foundation; in most of them there was a decided religious leaning.

To-day, conceptions of trade and commerce are divorced from religion, and, in the main, from religious influence; if not actually immoral, they certainly are unmoral. Such a state of things as the two factors, capital and labour, opposing each other, would have been unthinkable in mediæval times, and the modern trade union, or employers' combination, holding, as they do, a watching brief for their respective sides, could have found no place in the old Guild system, where master and servant laboured side by side, captain and private, as it were, in the same industrial regiment. The interest of one was bound up in that of the other, and the name which was applied to many of their associations—" Fraternities "—emphasises the family relationship which existed.

They were, as J. A. Froude says,

> Organisations set on foot to realise that most necessary, if most difficult, condition of commercial excellence under which man should deal faithfully with his brother, and all wares offered for sale of whatever kind should honestly be what they pretend to be: that cloth put up for sale was true cloth, of true texture and full weight; that leather was sound and well tanned; wine pure, measures honest; flour unmixed with devil's dust; associations who were generally to look to it that in all contracts between man and man for the supply of man's necessities what we call honesty of dealing should be truly and faithfully observed.

The complexities of modern industry are such that we could not, if we would, return to the simple relationships which existed in trades during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; yet there is a sense in which these were really

"good old times," the halcyon period of the craftsman; and this was doubtless in the minds of those who, in various ways, sought to arrest the evils attendant upon the unbridled competition of the early nineteenth century. It is because the Co-operative movement of to-day sets out to exhibit the same spirit of fraternity which was characteristic of the mediæval associations that the writer feels justified in recording here a few particulars concerning one Guild which flourished in Bristol, one which was only dissolved at just about the period that Co-operative schemes were beginning to agitate men's minds in the early nineteenth century.



MERCHANT TAYLORS' HALL.

Mr. Francis Fox has carefully traced its origin and development, and it is from his excellent work that the following details have been gleaned.

This Guild, originally in 1392 the ancient fraternity of St. John the Baptist, afterwards the ancient fraternity of "Merchant Taylors," known by various other titles in the following centuries, in which the Mysteries, Crafts, Companies, and Corporations appear and reappear as the conditions environing the Association altered from time to time, was finally, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, known as the Company of Merchant Tailors.

There was no doubt in the minds of the early Guildsmen as to the continuity of the fraternities; not only in these records, but in many others one can see evidences of their strong faith, "with the grace of God for ever to endure." And in essence their instincts were true.

One of the first concerns of the brethren was the election of officials; these, the Master, the Keeper, and the Wardens, were elected by the brethren and sisters at the annual meeting, which indicates the democratic nature of the constitution. To these was entrusted the right of admitting new members, but it was specifically ordered that only men and women of "goode conversation and honeste" were to be admitted, and all had to find sureties for their good faith that they would keep the ordinances.

To estimate correctly the position occupied by mediæval associations of this kind it is necessary to apprehend the environment amid which they were operating. In those days, not to be associated in some definite form with others meant a considerable loss in prestige and power. To be associated with other like interested individuals, whether for municipal or trade purposes, carried with such association privileges and opportunities; and, needless to say, these advantages were jealously guarded against intrusion from outsiders.

Two important considerations thereby arose: first, that for the well-being of the craft none but skilled workers should be admitted to the fraternity; secondly, since the credit of the town, so far as the particular industry was concerned, greatly depended upon the reputation earned by the workers therein, the interest of the community led the municipality to uphold the Guild. It was, in fact, due to the discredit which was being brought upon Bristol tailors through the bad workmanship and dishonesty of ribald or other persons not skilled in the craft that the Mayor and Common Council of the city assented to regulation by the Guild officials.

As instancing their close connection with religious matters, it is interesting to note that a chapel was built

by them in the church of St. Owen, and divine service was celebrated daily by the chaplain of the Guild, wherein the brothers and sisters assembled "to the honour of God and St. John the Baptist." On special days during the year every brother and sister had to attend at this chapel,

> or some other place that is honest and assigned by the Master of the Fraternity, to hear the ordinances read before all the company, that every one of them may the better know the ordinances and the meaning of the required oath. Moreover, if needful, any concerns touching the common profit of the Fraternity are at the same time to be discussed.

This assembling was obligatory upon every brother and sister, "upon peril of his oath if that he be in town and may come thereto." A very practical regulation, and one which might profitably be adopted by modern institutions.



MERCHANT TAYLORS' HALL: ENTRANCE PORCH.

Not the least among the good offices of the fraternity were those concerned with the succour and help of the poor and needy, the aged, and the infirm of their members. A brother in poverty, or one who had fallen into "mischief," and was not able to work, could report himself to the Guild, delivering what goods he had to the master and wardens; who, after making an inventory, would return them for use during his lifetime, after which they reverted to the fraternity. In addition, he was granted 1s. a week from the funds of the Guild—a by no means inconsiderable sum in those days, when a cow could be

bought for 7s., a sheep for 3s., and a pig for 4d.—this, if the member were single. If he were married and had children, then his goods were divided into three portions, two-thirds going to the wife and children, and the third part, his portion, had to be yielded up as aforesaid.

The personal conduct of each brother and sister was known to the community, and if one deliberately wasted his substance in riotous living, in the time of need, such a one might find himself "held to his chance to do the best for himself"; but the sick and helpless were always visited and provided for, and great concern was manifested that brethren and sisters of the fraternity at death should be buried in Bristol, so that within the radius of ten miles the wardens of the fraternity were empowered to use the common funds to bring the body home and "do him to be buried worshipfully."

But we are, perhaps, for the moment, more concerned with those provisions which were made for the ensurance of good and honest work by the craftsmen, and for securing fair conditions of labour.

In estimating the considerations which actuated ordinary commercial transactions then and now, one is reminded of Mr. Ruskin's definition of the difference in business between the man of honour and a rogue, "the former gives as much to his customer for his money as he can, and the latter as little." The spirit of Guild regulations were of the honourable type. Any attempt to corner supplies or take advantage of a purchaser was met by fines and sometimes severe punishment—in fact, roguery of any kind came in for censure and punishment, and habitual offenders were eventually excluded by fines imposed by the Guild officials or the Mayor. Careless workmanship was strictly guarded against.

If any tailor of the said craft lose (or spoil) by his evil working cloth or garment to him delivered to be cut, if the possessor of the said cloth will thereof complain to the master and the wardens and certify by his oath how much the cloth cost him, the costs, if it be found that the said garment may not conveniently serve the possessor and deliverer, shall be fully given and paid, and the

garment shall remain with the tailor as his own goods, and so every tailor shall be better advised to cut well and efficiently the cloth that is unto him delivered to be cut.

It is interesting to note that the tailor is no shopkeeper, but a craftsman working on the material supplied to him by his customer, and receiving the due reward of his labour; but it affords food for reflection, when we consider the delightful irresponsibility of the modern tailor, that a really bad workman might in those days be actually prohibited from spoiling good cloth.

Competition was regulated, and never permitted to operate outside well-defined limits. Thus the Mayor was empowered to exact forty pence from any unfranchised tailor plying his craft in the town, and working on Sundays and holidays was visited with fines, as also, by the way, was the slander of another. The number of apprentices to be taken by each master was strictly limited, and, when their term had expired, before being admitted to the craft, these workmen had to satisfy the wardens and master as to their skill; and whilst one might be certified to make coats, kirtles, a woman's gown, hose, and doublet; another would only be permitted to make all manner of men's garments, and no other. Such was these mediæval tailors' concern for labour, both in respect to quality and quantity.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century the system of making goods for a speculative market was beginning to exhibit itself and to bring discord into the affairs of the fraternity, for in 1489 it was decided that

From this time forward none within our fellowship shall sell any kind or manner of hose whatever it be, man's or woman's, in the market commonly called the Hie Strat or market place upon bords or tressels or other ways, but in their shops or homes on pain of fines and eventually expulsion from the fellowship,

and from this time, as the nation became animated by the spirit of commercial expansion, this Guild of the "Taylors," in common with others, lost its exclusive control of the craft. Moreover, the rapacity of Henry VIII. in confiscating Guild funds and effects, upon the plea that such were religious endowments, doubtless

prompted those who still were of the Guild to be discreetly silent in respect to old-time regulations.

* The last surviving member of the fraternity, Isaac Amos, died in 1824. The property of the Guild, under a scheme sanctioned by the Court of Chancery in 1849, is vested in trustees who are able to maintain several old pensioners in the Company's Almshouse in Merchant Street. The ancient Guild Hall still stands in Tailor's Court, Broad Street, and in the early part of the nineteenth century was much used for public purposes.

This chapter would not be complete without a brief reference to the general decay of the Guilds and the rise of modern industrial methods.

It is not generally recognised what a profound significance the ecclesiastical reforms of Henry VIII. had for all phases of men's lives. It could not be otherwise. Any reform which cuts at the basis of long-accepted authority and tradition must have a like effect. For the first time in our history the Church was relegated to second place upon matters of opinion. All the pent-up envyings, mistrusts, and jealousies which had been held in check, as much from fear of priestly censure as by reason of Guild ordinance, began to exhibit themselves in the commercial life of the nation, and it soon became apparent that, now the infallibility of the Church was open to question, it was but reasonable to question the expediency of Guild regulations, especially seeing that these had been largely founded upon canon law.

Further, under the fostering care of Henry, and later of Elizabeth, the country gentlemen acquired an importance in the State they had never before possessed, and there were inducements for wealthy Guildsmen to leave the town for the country, which many of them did, purchasing for themselves country seats, and reaping a rich harvest in political power and prestige. As they gained power and honour in the State, these members, by extravagant displays of their riches, were able to shame their poorer brethren from the Guild feasts, and, as if to

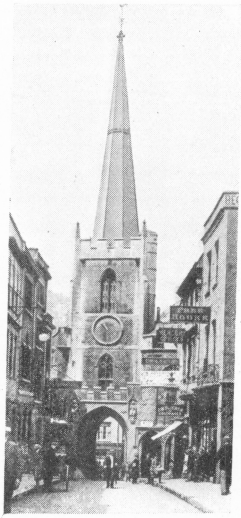
* Arrowsmith's "Bristol Dictionary."

make sure of themselves, they passed resolutions making attendance thereat conditional upon certain forms of dress being worn, such as were quite out of reach of the poor man, until the latter became practically disfranchised. In course of time, the unfranchised of the crafts began to set up other centres where they would not be hampered by Guild restrictions. Some of the most important of our manufacturing towns derive their origin from this movement.

Nemesis came surely, if slowly. By the eighteenth century these associations had ceased to be anything more than a medium for spectacular mummeries. Well into the nineteenth century a great historian could write of them that, " the stately token of ancient honours still belongs to them, and the remnants of ancient wealth, patronage, and power." But their glory in respect to trade matters had long since departed. Some of their regulations which had become embodied in statute law had been found a hindrance to the free development of commerce; moreover, they enslaved, rather than protected the worker. What privileges remained to such of these fraternities as then existed were the exclusive right of a few individuals, and were, in the main, political and social rather than economic. The old spirit had gone—privilege had replaced fraternity. A new spirit had arisen in commerce; freedom was its watchword—freedom to compete. It became the ordinary custom to address ourselves " not to people's humanity but to their self-love, and not to talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages." A capitalist class came into existence, and the antagonistic attitude of labour and capital towards each other quickly evolved. The crude economics of the day represented them as equally equipped for the fight, the workmen being free to compete for work and for wages. A blind eye was turned to the actual facts, which were apparent that in a large measure this meant a freedom to starve.

To win back their reasonable due as artisans and industrial units the workers have urged reforms upon many lines running parallel to one another during the

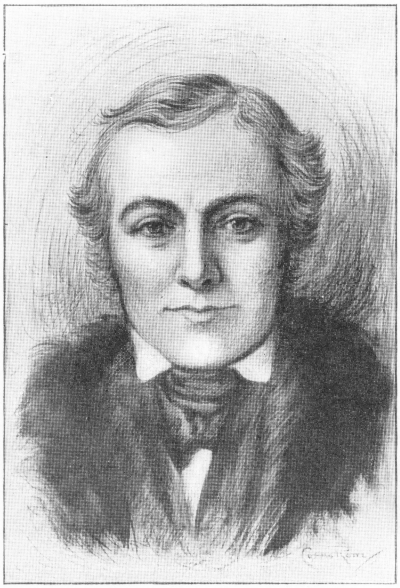
past 100 years. By their own efforts, and in spite of tremendous difficulties, they have raised themselves from the slough of despond into which they had sunk. It has been the old spirit of fraternity adapting itself to the new environment which has worked the miracle, for it is nothing less, and of all the voluntary associations which have taken part none deserves greater honour than the Co-operative movement, the development of which in Bristol it is intended to trace in the pages which follow.



CHAPTER II.

Robert Owen, the Prophet.

AMID the sickening welter of unregulated competition through which Industrialism floundered during the last decade of the eighteenth, and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, a voice rings out here and there, now demanding political, then social equity for the sons of toil, but seldom indeed is there found one wise enough or bold enough to challenge the basis upon which the machinery of industrial affairs at that time appeared to depend. Save one, all accepted the basis of free (?) competition as being necessary to successful commercial enterprise. That one, Robert Owen, a large-hearted business man, a student and a philosopher, withal a practical social reformer, contended otherwise. Fifty years before John Ruskin wrote "There is no wealth but life" Owen was actually demonstrating at New Lanark that the acceptance of this principle by the commercial world was good business. For twenty-eight years he maintained a magnificent industrial enterprise, conducted



ROBERT OWEN.

with special regard to ethical considerations, achieving not only commercial success, but an abundance of real wealth in happy life to the community.

It is not the intention of the writer to deal with those twenty-eight years. But, with the subsequent life of this man, Co-operators in general, and Bristol Co-operators in particular, are specially interested, for his followers were amongst those who inspired the Co-operative movement, and his visit to Bristol in the winter of 1840–41 undoubtedly had something to do with the starting of the first Co-operative Society in Bristol.

But, apart from these considerations, there is another, perhaps to the historian, more potent reason why some recognition should be made in these pages of this man's work. He was a link between the old and the new; he sought to retain that which was good in the old family system of industry, and to apply its principles in developing upon the new factory system. He has been called "The Father of English Socialism." In theory, perhaps, he was, and his teachings would be assented to by the average educated Socialist to-day; but, in fact, he was a true aristocrat, having a father's love and sympathy for the people, but scarcely trusting them. It is indeed said that his schemes failed by reason of the fact that he was the sole guiding and controlling spirit; so much was this so that, when his support was withdrawn, collapse speedily ensued through an inherent lack of self-reliance on the part of others.

The condition of industrial England during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century was such as to lead one of our greatest economic historians to estimate it as the worst in our island story. War with France, high protective duties upon imports (especially upon corn), child labour, and practically no education; the wealthy multiplying riches, and the people starving. Unemployment was chronic, and when, after the termination of the war in 1815, the forces were disbanded, 200,000 men were thrown upon the already overstocked labour market. From 1815 to 1820 wages declined in some districts as much as 50 per cent. A bad harvest in 1816 drove the

price of corn from 63s. to 94s. per quarter. Meanwhile, trade expanded, manufacturers and landowners were satisfied, but discontent and extreme poverty were the lot of the working classes.

On all sides it was recognised that unemployment was a problem which was in great need of explanation and solution, and it was in connection with this question that Robert Owen first became recognised as the exponent of a new order of society.

At a Conference held in the autumn of 1817 he suggested that the displacement of human labour by machinery was largely responsible, in a primary sense, for the prevailing conditions in the labour market, and he boldly advocated that work should be found for those out of employment. He claimed that the duty of the community was to educate the people into good and useful habits of living. To remedy the existing evils, steps should be taken to establish self-supporting home colonies, consisting of from 500 to 1,500 persons of all sorts and conditions, due care being taken to provide such accompaniment, in respect to natural conditions and scientific adaptation, as to influence the life of the community towards that which is best and noblest. The cost of his scheme he estimated at £96,000, which he suggested might be raised either by voluntary subscription, from the parish, or the Government.

Questioned as to why this apparently simple solution of social problems had not been before adopted, Owen was led, by his extreme punctiliousness in regard to argument, to express opinions throwing doubt upon the correctness of orthodox religious thinking; this straightforward action cost Owen and his schemes much. That meeting was the turning point of Owen's career. He avowed himself a Socialist, and from that time forward he sought to educate the public in the direction of organising and regulating industry. In 1828 he left Lanark, and entered upon his life's ministry to the cause he had at heart. In 1840 he came to Bristol.

The path of the social reformer in 1840 was hard, as will presently be seen. But it was not only with the

critical and hostile public that Owen had to contend: many of his difficulties arose from the inexperience and ignorance of his professed supporters. Then, again, there was little or no cohesion among the sections of the working-class reformers in those days. The Chartists were just beginning to agitate, and were perhaps the most prominent in the public arena, but they would be content with nothing but the Charter, and viewed Owen's schemes as visionary and impracticable.

What, then, did Owen propose to do? Nothing less than to evolve a new moral world by a rational system of society. In other words, to substitute science and reason for haphazard ignorance and superstition in the affairs of men.

In a series of lectures delivered in London in 1841 he expounded his views to crowded audiences. This was just after his visit to Bristol, where he was not given sufficient hearing to make his position clear. These lectures were published under the title of

LECTURES ON THE RATIONAL SYSTEM OF SOCIETY
derived solely from Nature and Experience, as propounded
By ROBERT OWEN,
versus
SOCIALISM *derived from Misrepresentation, as explained by* THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER AND OTHERS;
and versus the
PRESENT SYSTEM OF SOCIETY,
derived from the Inexperienced and Crude Notions of Our Ancestors, as it now exists in all the Opposing, Artificial, and Most Injurious Divisions in all Civilised Nations, but more especially in the British Empire and in the United States of North America.

Therein Owen presents a carefully-reasoned criticism of present methods, and contrasts with them what might be were our affairs scientifically and reasonably arranged. He claimed that

> The rational system of society had been based on the unchanging and everlasting words of God, which have been spoken through the facts in the language of the universe.

These facts—"fundamental principles," as Owen called them—were as follows:—

> 1. That man is a compound being, formed of his constitution at birth, which is his nature, and of the continued influence of external circumstances upon it from birth to death; such original

constitution or organisation and the external circumstances continually acting and reacting each upon the other.

2. That man is compelled, by the constitution of human nature, to receive his feelings and convictions, which are instincts of his nature, independently of that which is erroneously called "free will" in man.

3. That his feelings or convictions, or both of them united, create the motive to action called the will; which motive to action stimulates him to act and decides his actions.

4. That the organisation (at birth) of no two infants is precisely similar, nor can art subsequently form any two human beings to become precisely similar, physically or mentally.

5. That, nevertheless, the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed into, comparatively, a very inferior or a very superior being; and these extremes of character, or any intermediate mean, will be according to the kind and qualities of the external circumstances by which the individual shall be surrounded.

To detail the many points of view from which Owen tackled the social problem would mean the writing of many books. In this one we are concerned mainly with his attitude in respect to education and trade.

He was primarily an educationist, and insisted upon education of young and old before all else. Truth to tell, the real basis of all his teaching was education, and considerable sums of money were spent by him in attempting to educate his own day and generation. He insisted upon the family obligation in all departments of human affairs, and denounced competition of man with man as inhuman and unscientific. But, chief of all, he contended that profit upon cost price was immoral, and, acting upon this contention, he sought to establish his home colonies. It was to this end that he opened his propaganda in Bristol. The idea was a far-seeing one, but, as he himself saw later in life, the time was not ripe. To use his own words :—

Any sudden and coercive attempt which may be made to remove even misery from men will prove injurious rather than beneficial. Their minds must be gradually prepared by an essential alteration of the circumstances which surround them for any great and important change and amelioration in their condition.

And again:—

It will require some time before the mind which has been hitherto alone formed in man can be made to comprehend how this new superior mind and spirit can be created by society.

And so it proved. His community schemes one after another fell through, not from faulty principles so much as from the faulty human material of which they were composed. That at Tytherly, in Hampshire, created much stir in and around the neighbourhood of Salisbury for a year or two, but eventually dissensions arose, which soon brought disintegration, and afforded opportunity for the enemy to blaspheme. The following extract, copied from the *Salisbury Herald* of July 11th, 1840, shows how eagerly an unsympathetic press seized upon these defections to discredit Socialism:—

SOCIALISM AS IT IS.

The community at Queenwood, near Tytherly, are already falling into the sere and yellow leaf. The public of the surrounding towns and villages have ceased to be excited by the blasphemous and seditious lectures which only a few months since attracted hundreds on every Sabbath day to this sink of sin and wickedness. Such is the apathy at the present time that these worthies have been compelled for a time to abandon their Sunday lecturing for want of visitors, and such is their domestic sociality that their great man and farmer, Mr. Adlam, has actually quitted through a general quarrel. So much for the vaunted system where all is peace, love, and harmony.

The movement does not appear to have taken definite shape in Bristol, though much publicity was secured through the violent methods adopted to discredit Owen and his followers. The press and the Church joined hands to denounce this "worker of iniquity"; virulent articles made their appearance in the newspapers, and the Owenites, Socialists, and Chartists, who were all associated at the Hall of Science, were subjected to petty persecutions. As a sample of editorial candour the following is quoted from *Felix Farley's Journal* of October 3rd, 1840:—

SOCIALISM IN BRISTOL.

We have seen, in the rear of Broadmead, facing the lower Arcade, a building about 80 feet long, 70 feet wide, which is now being fitted up—and that can only be done at great expense—as a Hall of Science. The information that we can obtain concerning it is that it is taken by the Socialists, and that it will probably be completed for the reception of votaries in three or four months. The building will apparently be finished in a style calculated to attract simpletons, and among other accessories to this end is a

place reserved for a music gallery. We also observed a door, which may be found useful when a troublesome visitor appears, opening into the River Frome. Where the funds come from to finish this expensive building is to us a mystery. When this Temple of Satan is opened for the sensual mysteries of the New Moral World it will be high time for parents, employers, and masters of families carefully to ascertain where all the young persons dependent upon them spend their evenings.

This delightfully "charitable" effusion was followed a fortnight later by a writer who signed himself "A Christian." Professing to be shocked at the announcement which had been made, he considered every parent and Christian was indebted to the editor for timely warning of the approaching pest. Regret was expressed that, infamous as this design was, the law was only powerful against blasphemy, and very suggestive comment was made upon the door leading to the River Frome. The correspondent then went on to point out that the frightful considerations of atheism and blasphemy must be looked for in Mr. Owen's lectures. He recalled a visit recently made to Worcester, where Owen was met in argument by a champion of the cause of righteousness in the person of Mr. Brindley. Owen was completely defeated, his principles exciting so much disgust among the people that he had to depend upon the swiftness of his heels for safety. Brindley followed from place to place denouncing him, and eventually Owen, shaken to rags, departed. The epistle concluded with a hope that the cudgels would be taken up in Bristol.

Meanwhile, however, the Hall of Science was slowly rising from its foundations, and on December 12th the inauguration was announced in the press. There was no ambiguity about the advertisement. Owen and his followers had no qualms about calling a spade a spade, and accordingly the bill of fare read as follows:—

SOCIALISM.

BRISTOL HALL OF SCIENCE TO BE OPENED ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH, 1840, WHEN

TWO LECTURES

WILL BE GIVEN.

(*a*) "UTILITY OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS," by MR. G. SIMKINS.

(*b*) "SCIENCE OF SOCIETY," by MR. ROBERT OWEN.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21ST—"SCIENCE OF SOCIETY," by MR. ROBERT OWEN.

TUESDAY—"IMMORALITY OF SOCIETY, AND MEANS OF IMPROVING IT," by MR. SIMKINS.

WEDNESDAY—"SOCIALISM," by MR. LLOYD JONES.

THURSDAY—PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE BEST MEANS OF REMOVING POVERTY AND CRIME.

SUNDAY—MESSRS. LLOYD JONES AND ROBERT OWEN.

ADMISSION: 3d., 6d., and 1s. Clergy and Magistracy Specially Invited.

MONDAY—PUBLIC FESTIVAL, TEA, AND BALL, TO COMMEMORATE THE OPENING OF HALL AND VISIT OF THE GREAT PHILANTHROPIST.

TICKETS may be obtained from Mr. FISHER, 34, Philadelphia Street; Mr. LOVELL, 5, Thomas Street; Mr. LANE, 19, Orange Street. The Hall is capable of seating 3,000 persons.

Felix Farley's Journal accepted and published the advertisement, but, as if to excuse this lapse from what was fitting, comment upon the nature of the proposed programme was made in another part of the paper:—

It is with deep regret we find by an advertisement in another column that the principles of Socialism continue to be publicly inculcated and disseminated by Mr. Owen and his deluded followers, and that Bristol is about to be the theatre for their display and Robert Owen a chief performer. We can never believe he will be allowed to deliver his lecture or to hold his tea parties and entertainments without an attempt being made to expose their pernicious tendency.

We trust that in religious Bristol he will find very few indeed of its inhabitants that are even tainted with his infidel principles.

It is evident, however, that this was not sufficiently strong to inspire deeds of "derring do," for this enterprising journal, on the eve of the opening of the hall, submitted Owen's principles to a close scrutiny, in an article in which truth and falsehood were so skilfully blended as to give the whole a semblance of truth. The article in question expressed disgust that Bristol was to be polluted by open advocacy of the diabolical doctrines of Socialism, characterising them as demoralising and filthy, and speaking of the author as "the too-celebrated Robert Owen." The writer goes on to state:—

1. That Socialists do not believe in and worship a God.
2. That infidels or Socialists (*sic*) do not recognise immortal souls.

3. That Socialists do not believe in responsibility.

4. That Socialists, like proper brutes, forgetting that they have reason, follow instinct only.

5. Socialists deny free will.

6. Socialists do not practise marriage, but live promiscuously with their females and leave them when they like.

7. Socialists do not train up their children in families.

Making all due allowance for the extravagant methods of writing then adopted, one cannot but brand this as a most scurrilous and dastardly attack upon a thoroughly sincere and honest individual. It is, however, something of a tribute to Owen's power, to say nothing of the rightness of his principles, that such frantic attempts should have been made to decry him. All kinds of slanders were freely circulated about the Owenites. The celebrated Brindley was sent for to swell the chorus, and there can be no doubt that at times Owen was in serious danger from personal violence. He knew this perfectly well himself, and, if needs be, he was prepared to lay down his life. For, he said, "What was his life—an old man of three score and ten—if by yielding it up he might sow the seed which should lead to the emancipation of the universal human race?" And this was the man whose doings were being reported in the enlightened press of Bristol under the headline of "The Footsteps of the Beast," the Hall of Science being termed "The Den of Beasts."

As a result of the agitation in Bristol, a debate was instituted between Robert Owen and Brindley. This took place at Ryan's Circus on January 5th, 1841, before a very large audience. It indicates the enormous interest which this event occasioned that the proceeds, which were handed to the General Hospital, amounted to no less a sum than £100. Owen adopted a reasoning attitude, arguing that our characters are formed for us, not by us, and that our early environment fixes for us in the main the course of our future existence. He denounced the system of buying cheap and selling dear. He condemned no one for not adopting his system, but he absolutely denied the inferences which had been drawn by Brindley

and others as to sexual immorality. His system did not sanction such abominations. On the contrary, it took away the desire to indulge oneself at another's expense. He proudly pointed to the virtuous condition of New Lanark under his direction. He and his system had been shamefully traduced by Brindley and his supporters. It was true he did not believe every word of the Bible, but men's beliefs were beyond their own control, and were formed for them rather than by them.

Brindley, in the course of his remarks, indulged in many personalities. Playing upon the religious susceptibilities of his audience, he portrayed Owen as a monster who would pervert all that was holy and sacred to man. He asserted that Socialism aimed at the destruction of all our institutions; that it denied the sacred bond of marriage; denied religion and God; also a future state of rewards and punishments. He skilfully avoided the main issue of Owen's proposals, and successfully drew his too-generous opponent into arguments bearing on personal opinions respecting marriage and the Bible.

Of course, the victory was said to be with Brindley; "that this important controversy had banished Socialism for ever, except in the minds of the most vile and dead to shame, from our city." According to one, Socialism was likened unto Jezebel, with painted face, and her head, looking forth from her window, deserved nothing better than to be thrown down and trodden underfoot. According to another, a reverend gentleman, it was considered to be the triumph of Christian truth over Socialism.

Speaking of this debate, Frank Podmore says :—

> It is difficult even now to read the records of the debate, preserved in the official account issued by Brindley himself, without experiencing feelings of shame and indignation stronger than Owen's system would have sanctioned. Brindley, a popular lecturer who knew his business, skilled in cheap rhetoric and effective repartee, employed all the arts of the platform hooligan to bring ridicule and discredit on his aged antagonist, too simple to foil the attacks, and too little used to insolence to know how to deal with it.

Incidental to the controversy, Owen paid a visit to the Commercial Rooms during his stay in Bristol, with the

view of speaking to the merchants and manufacturers assembled there. Himself a most successful manufacturer, one would have thought they would have been glad to hear; but no sooner was his identity made known than he was escorted quietly but firmly to the street, and the door closed upon him.

Brindley, the scandal monger, was fêted and honoured by the presentation of £250, besides other valuable presents, mainly for being orthodox and unscrupulous. Robert Owen, like other great teachers in the world's history, for being heterodox, was held up to the scorn and contumely of his contemporaries. To-day his traducers are forgotten, but his teachings are being hailed as the new discoveries of social science. His position now finds acceptance among advanced thinkers in both theology and sociology. He accepted for himself, though not asking the same from others, a reasonable interpretation of the Scriptures over half a century before the Higher Criticism, and a century before the movement towards a Liberal Christianity. His was the first infants' school in the country, and the methods of teaching therein adopted are only now finding their way into the elementary school curricula. The Garden City movement owes much to Robert Owen; and if ever the callous Poor Law system is broken up in this country some of the credit must be granted to Robert Owen's lead towards humanitarianism and social reconstruction.

The influence he has had upon all working-class movements is incalculable. His name lives in the annals of the Co-operator and Socialist alike, for he did as much for the one as the other. His Socialism was of that practical type which really made Co-operation possible. It was his insistence upon the immorality of profit upon cost price which caused the evolution of the dividend upon purchases, which, perhaps, has done more than anything else to popularise the Co-operative movement to the masses.

Those who worked with him knew the strenuousness of his life, and it is not too much to say they not only

respected but loved him. Speaking in 1899, Mr. G. J. Holyoake said :—

Owen in his time was like John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. The wilderness is now peopled, and if you advocate something new the worst that happens is that people stop their ears; but in Owen's days they tried to kill him. He gave his fortune and time, and encountered worse perils than death: the peril of obloquy. He taught the doctrine of circumstances, which everybody talks about now, only they call it "environment." Now, what does that mean? George Eliot says: "It teaches to men that our fate comes to us from afar, and what we have been makes us what we are." Those who know that, instead of thinking how bad the world is, instead of mourning that so many men are so bad, wonder that they are not worse. Born into this life without their knowledge or consent, surrounded by ignorance, evil laws, evil communications, dangerous environment, little information, and a good deal of toil and hopelessness, the wonder to me is that so many of these victims of environment rise out of their depressing conditions and circumstances. From this view of things you no longer look upon a man with anger because he is not what you expect; rather you regard him with pity and compassion for the hard fate which has befallen him. It was that doctrine which made Rochdale Co-operation possible. The angerless voices of Smithies and Cooper and others were owing to that consideration. Instead of hating men, they learned from Owen to condemn the system which was wrong, and to pity those who supported it. Owen not only gave his wealth to make Co-operation possible, but he endowed it with a spirit of friendliness and philosophy previously unknown. Therefore, we owe him thanks and honour for what he did, and for what he taught to a reluctant world, who have learned his lesson and act upon it.

The Hall of Science still stands. At the time of its building, the site was Corporation property. For many years after the events recorded in this chapter took place the Hall was used for public purposes, becoming known in later years as the "Broad Mead Rooms." In 1875 they were leased by the Corporation to Mr. Parnall for a period of seventy-five years, he covenanting to build a factory on the site. In due course the firm of William Parnall and Sons bought the property, and the walls which once were honoured by the prophetic utterances of Robert Owen and his followers now resound to the chip of the chisel and the whirr of machinery, preparing tools for the shopocracy, the hated class of the 1840 democrats.

CHAPTER III.

Bristol Pioneers and their Methods.

THE passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 was the cause of much rejoicing among the working classes. So much had been predicted from a cleansing of the political Augean stables that the people, unversed in the wiles of political subtleties, were justified in expecting much from the extension of the franchise. Great things were done, it is true, but, in the main, the condition of the people did not improve. Moreover, the newly-enfranchised middle classes quickly developed a superior snobbishness towards the workers, and the Reform Parliament, which was to usher in the millennium, droned into staleness.

Once more the people attempted to capture the Parliamentary machine: a demand for six points, "the People's Charter," arose. These were: (1) Manhood Suffrage; (2) the abolition of property qualification for Parliament; (3) Payment of members; (4) Equal electoral districts; (5) Annual Parliaments; (6) the Ballot; and in Bristol the Chartist agitation was fiercely maintained. The Socialists' Hall of Science was the scene of many a disturbance, for the orators of the movement were by no means disposed meekly to turn the other cheek to the smiter; and to say that they were cruelly persecuted is to convey but a faint idea of the indignities these early reformers had to suffer. The Tory press, which indulged its coarse wit at the expense of any heterodox movement, alluded to them as "noisy blockheads," just as they had spoken of Owen as "the chief beast in a den of beasts," and the Liberal papers were contemptuously tolerant.

Although the Chartists and the Socialists fraternised at the Hall of Science, there does not seem to have been much theory in common between them. The Chartists were the Labour Party of their day, and would have subordinated any and every consideration to political opportunity. The Socialists were root and branch revolutionaries. The Chartists did not seek to understand the social problem so much as to put into operation political machinery calculated to shift the balance of power. But the Socialists dealt with cause and effect, and would have straightway instituted a new state of society altogether.

Meanwhile, however, the people wanted bread; the "hungry 'forties" were upon them, and, while Chartists, Socialists, and Anti-Corn Law Leaguers were agitating and educating, the poor were being cheated and starved. The real need of the hour was something of a more practical nature than theory, and it appears to have been through the joint action of Chartists and Socialists that a definite step was taken.

A nation of shopkeepers should reflect its character in the sale of wares, and, if this is so, and the English are such as Napoleon asserted, then in 1840 our national character could not have been *sans peur et sans reproche.* Apart from the evidence of preventive Acts like Food and Drugs and Weights and Measures, which have found their place in legislative enactments since then, a perusal of the newspapers of the period will reveal the abominable trickeries, by means of adulteration and short weight, which were practised by the trader upon the public. At least one newspaper in Bristol went so far as to denounce these methods in its columns, and to threaten further exposures unless there was better behaviour. These, and the extortions of the truck shop, were among the iniquities which the trader unhesitatingly adopted to swell his profits.

Upon those of equal intelligence and wealth the deception was merely inconvenient, perhaps unpleasant, but upon the poor, with their limited understanding,

power, and resource, these abominations, born of competitive trading, pressed with real severity.

The Chartists in their speeches referred to the traders as a " shopocracy," and seemed to regard members of that class with peculiar hatred. Political considerations may have been partly the cause, but, undoubtedly, this unrighteous grinding of the poor was the chief. It is not surprising, therefore, to find prominent Chartists amongst those who promoted *the first Co-operative trading concern in Bristol,* but it is more than probable that, by both Chartists and Socialists, the step was regarded rather as a necessary compromise than an actual reform. The text of the constitution, which is dated July, 1840, is eminently practical, and full of common sense. It bears no trace of that fiery eloquence which too often adorned the speeches of Chartists. Except in the case of violently partisan newspapers, the setting down of a definite programme has a wonderfully sobering effect in itself. But Richard Daniel, one of the Chartists referred to, does not appear to have been altogether a firebrand—in all probability it was for that reason he was ofttimes selected to occupy the chair. Felix Simeon, on the other hand, was a vigorous and effective speaker, and knew how to sway the crowd. His practicality, however, is shown in his adherence to this effort to start a Co-operative Store.

The enterprise was registered under the Joint Stock Act of 1840, as " a company formed for the purpose of more justly distributing wholesome provisions to the producers of real wealth." In their preamble they set forth:—

> Whereas divers and great frauds are the daily practice of the main body of the distributors of provisions, and whereas these frauds are more grossly practised on the unprotected poor and industrial classes, some individuals desirous of removing these continually increasing evils have determined on forming a Society for the purpose of enabling the producers of wealth to become also the distributors of some of the necessaries of life.

The capital was to be raised in shares of 10s. each, and the business, both buying and selling, was to be for cash.

A remarkable testimony is given to their democratic fervour—and, by the way, to the Chartist origin—in that the principle of one man one vote and no proxies was a part of the constitution, and a splendid example, too, of the survival of the mediæval ideal, in that women were admitted upon the same basis as men.

The Board, consisting of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and eleven Directors, was to be elected at the Half-yearly Meeting by ballot, a practical acceptance of one of the six points.

Postage in those days was an expensive luxury, and these enthusiasts had no money to throw away in that respect, so notices of shareholders' meetings were carried from house to house at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting, for the carriage of which he or she had to pay ½d.

That this was no mere investing concern is evident, for each member was expected to spend at least 1s. per week at the Store or submit to a fine of 1d. per share.

These constitution-mongers, enthusiastic for righteousness in purchases and sale, overlooked one important consideration: they omitted to make definite provision for the disposal of profit. They contented themselves with the simple statement that "profits would be divided every six months." Perhaps modesty did not permit of their anticipating anything in the way of profit, and in all probability for a year or two little or nothing was made; either this, or, in accordance with joint-stock procedure, surpluses were divided according to capital holding. At all events, whatever happened, and there is no evidence to show, the results in this respect were not satisfactory, for in 1847 an amendment of rule was carried dealing with this very matter.

And herein is the link between this old Society and those of the present day. Influenced, without doubt, by the Rochdale Pioneers, who had commenced active operations three years previously, these Bristol pioneers

boldly accepted the new principle in respect to profit. A fresh clause makes its appearance in the rules: that interest at the rate of 5 per cent is to be paid upon share capital, *the balance of the profits to be divided between the members in proportion to purchases.* It is upon the basis of this clause that the association may justly be considered the pioneer of Industrial Co-operation of the Rochdale type of Society in Bristol.

Another significant declaration made in these amended rules was to the effect that the company "shall not be responsible for the debts of its members." In the early days of the Co-operative movement, not the least among the disabilities under which Societies laboured was the absence of legal protection. There was unlimited liability; each individual was liable to be held responsible for the actions of the whole. In the eyes of the law each member was a partner in the firm, so that, as far as possible, it was but ordinarily discreet to protect the company as a whole from the indiscretions of its individual members. The first Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852, which laid down the principle of limited liability, relieved Co-operative officials from much anxiety in this respect.

One more word upon this interesting experiment in Co-operative enterprise. The rules of 1840 provided that share capital could be transferred, but not withdrawn, but in the event of shares being offered for sale the Committee had the prior claim to purchase. In taking up shares each individual had to agree to pay 6d. per month, and if in arrears two months, forfeit the share. In the amended rule this is modified by a fine of 6d. being imposed if three months in arrears, except the cause be sickness or unemployment; if six months in arrears the member was expelled, and the shares would be sold, the proceeds being devoted to the liquidation of the member's liabilities, and any balance that remained, returned. Further, it was enacted that no member should be allowed to hold more than fifty shares, or £25 in all. Nearly seventy years of Co-operation have made this appear a

very modest maximum investment, but the provision shows that these people were poor; that not many of them could hope to aspire to such wealth as £25, and incidentally it illustrates the despairing poverty of those times.

Mr. James Huntingdon, a well-known trade unionist and Co-operator of the present day, remembers as a boy fetching flour from a Co-operative Flour and Bread Store situated in Broad Weir, of which his father was a member. It is extremely probable that this was the company formed in 1840, and, like many others of the earlier working men's Co-operative Associations, the promoters first sought to provide themselves with flour and bread, free from adulteration, and as cheaply as the oppressive corn laws would permit them to be sold.

No more statistics of this Society appear to be available. There were no official returns published in those days. A manuscript copy of their rules reposes in the archives of the Registrar for Friendly Societies, and it is to the kindness of that gentleman that the writer is indebted for the information set forth. The original rules were signed in 1840 by Moses Clements, Felix William Simeon, Richard Daniel, William Lewis (Secretary); and the amendments on October 4th, 1847, by William Lewis (Chairman), Walter Batchelor, Felix William Simeon, T. Humphries, George Davis (Secretary), of whom it might well be said: "They builded better than they knew."

A long break, and another attempt to introduce the principle of Co-operation in trade makes its appearance on March 15th, 1859. The Bristol Industrial Co-operative Society, of 2, Whitsun Street, registered its rules.

The promoters set out the object of their association to be that of raising, by the voluntary subscriptions of their members, a fund for better enabling them to purchase food, firing, clothing, and other necessaries by carrying on in common the trade of general dealers. Share capital was raised in £1 withdrawable shares. Each

member had to take up five, and agree to pay for them at the rate of at least 3d. per week. The investment was to be allowed to accumulate for the sole interest of the member, or husband, wife, or children, or kindred of members, and no one could hold more than 100 shares.

The Committee, consisting of six ordinary elected representatives, three Trustees, Treasurer, and Secretary, met weekly. Ordinary members' meetings were held monthly, and general business meetings half yearly.

The system of buying and selling discloses a curious attempt to graft the mediæval ideal of regulation upon modern methods of production and exchange. In convenient districts agents were appointed, who had charge of the operation of buying and selling for the Society. The Leeds Co-operative Society started in similar fashion, except that, being a productive concern mainly, the agents were the sellers of the Society's produce.

The Bristol Industrial Society's Rules ran as follows:—

All the Society's goods purchased or manufactured for the benefit of the members shall be supplied to them and others through the medium of agents, to be appointed in various localities of the district not exceeding four miles from the Society's premises.

The retail prices at which the agents shall sell the goods of the Society and their remuneration shall be fixed by the Committee.

Every agent must pay ready money and be confined to purchase and sale of such goods as are produced by the Society; not allowed to purchase other goods of anyone else for purpose of sale.

Neglect of observing these rules meant a fine of 10s. for the first offence, and to lose the agency for the second.

Each member had to pay 1s. per quarter towards the expenses of management, though this proviso was afterwards cancelled, the entrance fees and fines being utilised for this purpose. The allocation of profits was quite an elaboration. First to be considered was the interest upon loans and share capital, or, as they put it, subscriptions. This was reckoned at 5 per cent. Whatever balance remained was devoted to (1) repaying loans, (2)

increasing capital, (3) a dividend upon purchases of goods made or sold by the Society, (4) the payment of one-third of the profits to members in respect to work or services rendered. Of course, a host of queries rises to one's mind in face of such crudely indefinite proposals, but there is no doubt that these folk divined the true nature of the problem they had to solve. They saw that without capital the business could not successfully be carried on. They saw, too, that it was far better to rely upon their own than other people's capital. But, chief of all, they perceived that the three factors—capital, labour, and custom—were in due measure jointly responsible for that fund which is called profit, and they sought to make an equitable division.

This Society was not a success. Writing in December, 1870, Mr. James Mayo, its first and only Secretary, said:

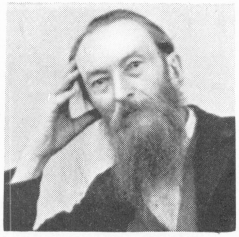
> The Bristol Industrial Society was dissolved in February, 1861, most of the few members joining the Bristol Industrial and Provident Society, which came into existence after ours with more capital and consequently more success.

Mr. Jas. Mayo was, at this time (1870), storekeeper for the Industrial and Provident Society in St. George's Road.

About the time the Bristol Industrial and Provident Society was projected an attempt was made to found a Mutual Co-operative Society. But this scheme never seems to have got further than the initial stages. In 1867, too, an attempt to start a Workmen's Co-operative Society in connection with the Bristol Sugar Refineries in Old Market Street proved abortive.

These two ripples being disposed of, one is free to concentrate upon the main stream of Co-operative effort from 1860 onwards. The honours are shared by two Societies, the first of which, the Bristol Industrial and Provident Society, has already been mentioned. In 1859 *Reynolds' Newspaper* was publishing a series of articles on the subject of "Rochdale Co-operation." Only a few years before this Mr. G. J. Holyoake had contributed to the *Daily News* his history of the Rochdale Pioneers. Thus

it is not surprising that the subject of Co-operation was beginning to attract the serious attention of thoughtful working men. One of these, Mr. James H. Pleace, a carpenter and joiner working at Messrs. Foster Bros.', of Pembroke Street, Brunswick Square, Bristol, was struck by the enormous possibilities which Co-operation seemed to open up to the working classes. Mr. Pleace had been in business as a general provision dealer in Milk Street, but had been unsuccessful, and had taken up his trade as joiner again. Reading these articles in *Reynolds' Newspaper*, he resolved to see what could be done in Bristol. He communicated with the Rochdale Society and procured information, then called a meeting of his shopmates. The firm of Foster Bros. was sympathetic and granted facilities. Several of those who attended the meeting were already associated in their trade union of carpenters, whose meetings were held at the Red Lion, in Redcliffe Street.



J. H. PLEACE,
aged 70 years and 6 months,
Magistrate, 1902.

Trade unionists were not too favourably regarded in those days, nor were the benefits of belonging to such associations any too apparent. Wages for skilled artisans were still of a fluctuating character; foodstuffs were dear and none too pure. Still, these men were rich as compared with those poor weavers of Rochdale, of whom it is recorded that there was general consternation when one "promised to find half-a-crown." When the meeting decided to establish a Society each member pledged himself to subscribe not less than £1. It was further laid down that no one was to be allowed to hold more than £5, one shilling being considered a reasonable minimum subscription. But, by the time their rules got into print in February, 1860, visions of abundant wealth had appeared on their mental horizon; the £5 maximum holding had increased to £200. The Committee had power granted them to purchase and extinguish shares;

otherwise the general line of their constitution was practically the same as the Bristol Industrial Society previously mentioned.

The first set of rules was signed by T. East, R. Hatherway, Wm. Wilkinson, and J. H. Pleace, and amongst those who took a leading part as trustees between 1860 and 1862 were Messrs. James Crafen, painter; C. Hannay, boot and shoe maker; E. J. Hatherley, carpenter; James Mayo, boot and shoe maker (afterwards storekeeper); John Ridor, brassfounder; Richard Henry Williams, pump maker. Others worthy of mention are Messrs. Israel Pascoe, John Wilde, and Joseph Harris, who served on the early Committee, also Messrs. James Hanway and J. Rowe, who, taught by Mr. James Pleace, officiated as manager and shopman respectively. Later on some typical West Country names appear—Messrs. William Gallop, Charles Chapman, H. W. Warren, H. C. Priest, and Edward Gough.

A very humble start was made early in the year 1860. At this time the total membership was twenty-nine, and the capital subscribed only amounted to £30. These people were ambitious, however; they had an eye to appearances, and looked out for a shop. This was found in Milk Street, and the father of the movement, Mr. James Pleace, was installed as shopman and Secretary. From 6 a.m. till 5-30 p.m. these Committee-men worked at the bench; then, under the inspiration and guidance of their Secretary, they turned in at their little shop at Milk Street, doffed coats, and slaved away till 11 or 12 p.m., their week-end labours often extending into the early hours of the Sabbath. This state of things lasted for three months, when it was found desirable to open shop all day, and Mr. J. Rowe was appointed storekeeper. He had been an assistant at an iron warehouse, and had some elementary knowledge of business methods. The Committee still assisted at evening times, and Mr. Pleace attended to the buying, his employers allowing him half a day each week for the purpose. In less than two years such progress had been made that larger premises had to

be sought, and a shop was taken at No. 75, Castle Street, a Branch being opened in Limekiln Lane.

In 1865 Mr. James Pleace left England for Australia, where he settled at Caboolture, near Brisbane. A few details concerning this man's career are worthy of reference. He was quite a Bristolian, having been born in Guinea Street, Redcliffe, in 1831. Like most Bristolians, he was proud of his city, and, though far away, his interest in Bristol affairs never abated when he finally settled in Australia. His fellow colonists soon recognised his worth. He was made a justice of the peace, and for some years was superintendent of the Sunday School in his township. He was justly proud of having been the father of Co-operation in Bristol, though when writing in the summer of 1902 he little knew of the vicissitudes through which the movement had passed since his departure in 1865. His enthusiasm for the cause was unbounded. During the early days, after closing time on Saturday evenings, he had to walk eight miles to his home at Claverton, spending Sunday with his two boys (he was a widower), and walking back to Bristol on Sunday evening to his lodgings, to be ready to start work on Monday morning at six o'clock. While in Australia he kept in touch with the old country through the medium of our Bristol press, and it was upon reading a report as to the Bedminister Society that he wrote to Mr. A. Bullock, giving many of the foregoing interesting details of the Society which he founded.

It would seem that this act was destined to be the coping stone of his useful career, for, ere his communication could have reached its destination, the soul of this Co-operative pioneer had passed away.

It would have been useful to have made some comparisons of statistics relating to the Society before and after his departure from Bristol, but none are available. It would appear, however, that the Store lacked some direction after he had gone. In 1869 the Central premises were moved to 5, Newfoundland Street, and four years later to St. George's Road. The financial position of the

Society at the end of 1873 was decidedly weak, and it can only be conjectured that the loose nature of their rules relating to the withdrawal of share capital hastened the end which came in 1874. During 1873 withdrawals had been constant, thirty-five members out of a total of 252 having left the Society, taking with them £206 out of a total of £822. The total trade for the year amounted to £2,047, and, as the expenses were £391, there could have been no margin for dividend. The total liabilities amounted to £2,291, against which there were assets of £1,331 for buildings and fixtures and about £300 stock.

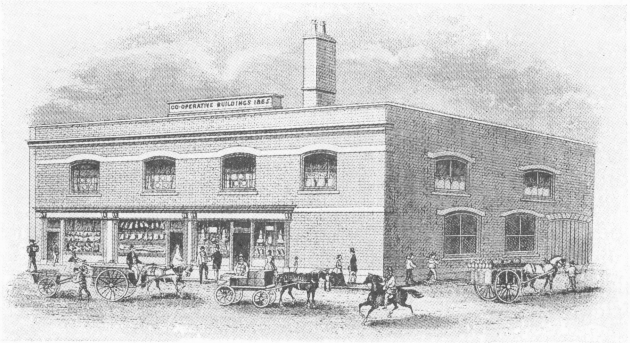
It has been stated that the downfall of the early Bristol Societies should be attributed to overbuilding and reckless buying, but these figures, although bad enough, do not quite bear out that contention. With a confident optimism in the power of Co-operation and a persevering enthusiasm such as actuated the pioneers this Society might have been saved. It is interesting to note that upon the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act in 1862 this Society registered afresh, taking to themselves the title of wholesale and retail dealers, with power to buy land. And, although they included a clause in their rules to the effect that the Society in Quarterly Meeting may authorise investment in any other Society or company with limited liability under either the Industrial and Provident Societies Act or the Joint Stock Act of 1862, there is no evidence to show that they knew of the starting of the C.W.S. in 1864. For ten years more they struggled on. The difficulties against which they had to contend we can only conjecture, but in 1874 the Bristol Industrial and Provident Society vanished from the scene for ever, leaving behind unpleasant recollections to those who had put their trust in the affair and a faint idea of "what might have been" in the copies of rules retained by the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

About a year after the starting of the Bristol Industrial and Provident Society a movement began to exhibit itself among the railwaymen, especially the engineers, for an interest in the undertaking. They accordingly approached the pioneers, who were, it will be remembered,

mostly carpenters, with a view to amalgamating their forces. It was thought advisable, however, that the engineers should be encouraged to start for themselves, they to serve one side of the city, and the carpenters the other. Accordingly, in October, 1860, the Bristol Equitable and Industrial Society was registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852. The first rules were evidently modelled upon those of the earlier Societies, but some novel features were introduced. Many of these engineers were members of the Ancient Order of Foresters, and so one is not surprised to find it enacted that the Society must do no trade either in malt, hops, or intoxicating liquors. They were propagandists, too, and believed in frequent meetings of members; like those tailors of the Craft Guild referred to in an earlier chapter, they believed that their association together should be as social as possible. Accordingly, another rule provides for general meetings of members once a month to explain the principles and laws of the Society, to discuss its affairs, and to make suggestions. The expenses of management were to be met by each member paying such sum as was necessary each quarter. These rules were signed by Messrs. John Edwards, James Wriggles, Richard Riby, and John Phillips (Secretary) on October 9th, 1861. A change of address from 81 to 88, West Street, necessitated other signatures, and Mr. Thos. Voules displaced Mr. John Phillips as Secretary.

This Society has the distinction of being the first in the kingdom to be registered under the Act of 1862. A fresh set of rules was accepted by the Registrar early in 1863, and the Bristol Equitable and Industrial Society became officially known as R. 1. These rules are remarkable for their many excellent provisions, and do credit to the far-seeing minds of those who compiled them. In the first place, one notices that no mention is made of wholesale trading; either they were more modest than the Industrial and Provident Society, which is very likely, or they did not grasp the full opportunities open to them under the new Act. The system of buying and selling produce through agents was a feature of their

constitution, as of the earlier Societies, each debtor or creditor to the Society being supplied with a book, into which his account was entered from time to time. Ordinary purchasers received a brass check as a voucher for goods purchased. Evidently dividend upon purchases was a constant element, for a rule is specially devoted to the regulation of the return of these books and checks at stated intervals. This is the first time that mention is made of checks in Co-operative rules in Bristol. Other quite as original provisions made their appearance for the first time, the mention of which indicates that experience



OLD KINGSLAND ROAD STORES.

had already been gained upon some most important considerations. Fixed stock was to be depreciated 10 per cent *upon nominal value.* A little more knowledge and experience would have shown them the futility of depreciating upon any other basis than original values, but the mere fact of mentioning the matter at all is something to their credit. It may be that they realised this weakness, for in their rule as to the disposal of net profits provision is made for reduction of fixed stock. Other rules which throw some little light upon their experiences provided that no employé could be nominated for Committee, and no Committee-man could nominate or second a colleague. Further, a Committee-man was to vacate his seat if holding a place of profit under the

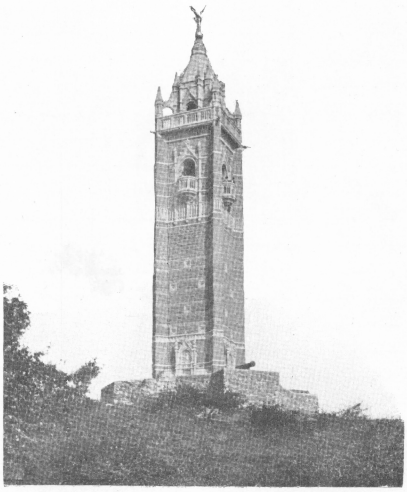
Society, if he became bankrupt, or if concerned in, or participating in, any contract with the Society.

This Society, which appears to have had a somewhat chequered existence, at one period must have operated on a fairly extensive scale. In 1865, when Mr. James Pleace left Bristol, they had four shops and a bakery. The picture herewith reproduced is taken from one of their grocery wrapping papers printed in 1869, and shows that then they had seven shops, a Butchery, Boot and Drapery Department, and a Bakery. It is probable that this Society was regarded as *the* Co-operative Society in Bristol, and its failure in 1871, said to be due to the reckless buying and altogether loose management by a single individual, doubtless had much to do with the downfall of the Industrial and Provident, and incidentally had much to do with blackening the reputation of Co-operation in Bristol for many years.

In the autumn of 1869 the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science met in Bristol under the presidency of Sir Stafford Northcote. Canon Kingsley contributed a well-reasoned appeal for a national system of education. Amongst other subjects Co-operation was discussed, although, as if by common consent, the press ignored the fact. Our G.O.M. of the movement, the late Mr. G. J. Holyoake, read a paper upon the "Defects of Official Statistics upon Co-operation," pointing out that there were up to December, 1868, 1,052 Societies, and in that year, according to the very imperfect returns issued, 286 had been dissolved and 96 had made no return. He asked for information. Why had these dissolutions taken place, when, and where? In Lancashire, he pointed out, there were 135 Societies, and there had been no dissolutions there. He further drew attention to the fact that during the previous five years the movement, as a whole, had spread enormously, the increase in membership, capital, and trade being 61 per cent, 196 per cent, and 186 per cent respectively. At the same conference the Rev. Henry Solly read a paper on "Co-operation: How it Affects the Working Classes." He referred particularly to the value of Co-operation in helping the working classes to get capital into their own

hands, and deplored the fact that for want of sufficient direction Co-operative capital was lamentably wasted. Manufacturing Societies were starved for the want of that which distributive Societies were throwing back upon their members.

How far either of these gentlemen was conscious of existing Societies in Bristol there is no indication whatever in their speeches. The appeal of Mr. Holyoake had its effect in due course, and it is worth remembering that Bristol had some connection with the institution of the very searching system of returns now issued by the Registrar of Industrial and Friendly Societies.



BOOK II.

MODERN ASSOCIATIONS OF CONSUMERS.

Chapters I. to XIII.—Bedminster Industrial Co-operative Society Limited.

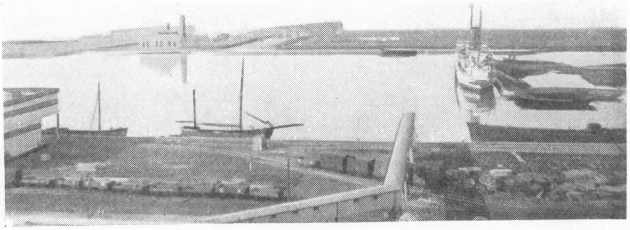
Chapters XIV. to XXIII.—Bristol and District Co-operative Society Limited.

Chapters XXIV. and XXV.—Shirehampton and Avonmouth Co-operative Society Limited.

Chapter XXVI.—Keynsham Industrial Co-operative Society Limited.

Chapters XXVII. and XXVIII.—Bristol Co-operative Society Limited.

Chapter XXIX.—Sundry Co-operative Enterprises.



CHAPTER I.

The Bedminster Industrial Co-operative Society Limited.

ALTHOUGH in 1881 there were still living in Bedminster some who had been members of one of the old defunct Societies, it is to none of these that the Bedminster Industrial Society owes its origin.

The pioneer was Mr. William Millard, who had been a member of the Highbury Coleford Society before coming to work at the South Liberty Colliery. By the rules of that Society he was not permitted to hold shares without trading; and, as the Store was too far away to permit of his doing duty in this respect, in due course his investment, amounting to between £30 and £40, mostly accumulated dividend and interest, was sent to him. Meanwhile, Mr. Millard had been trying to work up enthusiasm amongst his friends at the pit, with a view to starting operations on the spot.

Another of the pioneers was Mr. George Abraham. He lived near Mr. Millard, but he had previous knowledge of Co-operation. As a boy he lived at Nailsea, and at that time a Society existed in that centre of industry, as it then was, and George Abraham's father was a member. The Society failed, like the Bristol Societies, through faulty direction, and George's mother strongly urged her son to have nothing to do with the Bedminster

affair. But he had faith in the principle, and threw in his lot with his mates at the earliest opportunity.

Other pioneers and neighbours of Mr. Millard were Mr. Isaac Steeds and Mr. Job Parfitt. They, too, were converted, and these four spread the gospel throughout the colliery. The news of Mr. Millard's windfall did something to convince waverers that there was money in the idea of Co-operation, and interest was thus quickened through the action of the Highbury Coleford Society. Many informal conferences were held at the pit, and some meetings of a more formal character were held, both at the Bell Inn and the Star Inn.

Correspondence was opened up with the Co-operative Union; and, in due course, Mr. Joseph Clay, from Gloucester, and Mr. John Pryor, from Plymouth, attended a public meeting held in the British Schoolroom; and, acting upon the advice of these two gentlemen, a Provisional Committee was formed, the Model Rules of the Co-operative Union accepted, and the Bedminster Industrial Co-operative Society was launched forthwith.

The first twelve members were:—

Isaac Steeds, *Chairman.*	Alfred Edgell.
Ishmael Hamblin, *Treasurer.*	John Edgell.
Job Parfitt, *Secretary.*	Henry Harding.
Joseph Harver.	Thomas Cooper.
George Abraham.	W. W. Lane.
Henry Kew.	William Millard.

Many of these names are quite characteristic of the dwellers on the Mendips; possessed by men of strong, fearless temperament, accustomed to bend circumstance to their will, and like their Puritan forefathers looking to the Old Testament Scriptures for their guidance. Such men could not fail. By July 15th they had collected £23 4s. 3d., and two days later £8. 9s. 3d. more, making a total share capital subscription of £31. 13s. 6d. from less than thirty members.

On July 24th, 1882, the first purchase of goods was made. There was no local branch of the C.W.S. to advise the pioneers as to purchase of goods, and their opening order was placed with a Bristol wholesale grocer. The amount of subscribed capital at that date could not have

amounted to much more than £40, and with this magnificent sum these colliers and ironworkers determined to launch their venture. Unlike many similar beginners, they would be satisfied with nothing less than the real thing. No front room for them; they must have a shop, and a shop it was; only a little one, but still a shop. It was situate at 88, West Street. True, it was somewhat rickety, and seemed inclined to forcibly resent the burdens of sugar and other heavy commodities which were eventually deposited there; but even such a place, with its windows and sign *facia*, seemed likely to be more inspiring to the waverers than the front or back parlour of a member's house. And so it proved, for the first quarter's report stated that "a large number of shares have been taken up during the last month." The sales were averaging £40 a week, and the share capital was but £61; so the Committee had every reason to be proud of their first quarter's trading. It is evident they were, and, with more zeal than discretion, they declared a dividend of 1s. in the £ on members' purchases. For the next three months, as might have been expected, trade increased; but the sanguine hopes which had been raised by the favourable start were shattered when it was found that only a matter of £4. 6s. was available for dividend. Of this



West Street, Bedminster, 1882.

it was decided to allocate £1. 10s. for the non-members who had purchased, the members foregoing any distribution till the next quarter. Another three months did not bring much better results, the total available profit for dividend on the two quarters being something over £7, whereupon it was decided to declare a dividend of 8d.

For a few years the fortunes of the Store waxed and waned, and one cannot help thinking that the somewhat precipitate desire to declare a substantial dividend in the first quarter contributed largely to this state of uncertainty. It is a natural error for beginners to make, that the distribution of wares involves merely simple addition and subtraction; they overlook the fact that simplicity becomes complexity as more and more variety is introduced into the business. And, if the confidence of the public is to be secured, it is necessary to demonstrate a capability to deal as well with the large as the small issue. Co-operators of a later day have learned this lesson, and young Societies are now advised to proceed with extreme caution in the matter of dividends for the first quarter or two, and to concentrate their thought and energy upon securing a good financial foundation, with plenty of reserve strength.

In administrative affairs our friends had to pay dearly for their experience, particularly so in respect to the employés. They appear to have been singularly unfortunate in their selections during the early days. The chief qualification many of their managers possessed was the ability to take advantage of the Committee's lack of practical knowledge. Some were intemperate, others dishonest, and most of them obstinate and defiant. Some racy stories are told of one or two. One, a drinking man, upon receiving his notice, in language strongly reminiscent of the taproom, positively refused to part with the last day's takings. Then up spoke one of the sturdy colliers, his eyes glaring with righteous indignation, "If thee dusn't give up directly, I'll turn thee upside down and shake it out o' thee. What dust thee mean by trying to rob working men of their money? Out with it, if thee dusn't want a shaking!" In brief, but expressive fashion,

the chronicler of this incident goes on to say, "The erstwhile manager took a rapid survey of his opponent, gave up the coins, and trekked."

Another specimen of the genus had his wife in the shop to help him at week ends. This lady was of an argumentative turn of mind, and, when ordinary methods of persuasion failed, the shop weights were handy missiles with which to greet the partner of her joys. But this kind of thing had a lowering effect upon the Store, and the services of the couple were dispensed with. Another gentleman was of the "smart" set. During his term of office there was plenty of trade, but no profit. The Committee evidently had a shrewd idea as to where the profit had gone; for, in their report to the members, while noting an increase in sales, they "regret the amount available for dividend is less, through deficiencies shown in the accounts of the late shopman," which statement brought a letter to the Secretary from the gentleman referred to, threatening an action for libel, which, however, did not come off. Of course, it occasionally happened that through the independence of the man, or the necessity for prompt dismissal, the Store was left without a manager. At such times Mr. Geo. Abraham would leave his work at the pit and make good the deficiency. At a later date his fellows would like to have retained his services permanently, but Mr. Abraham preferred a more open life, although he was willing to serve in this capacity when required.

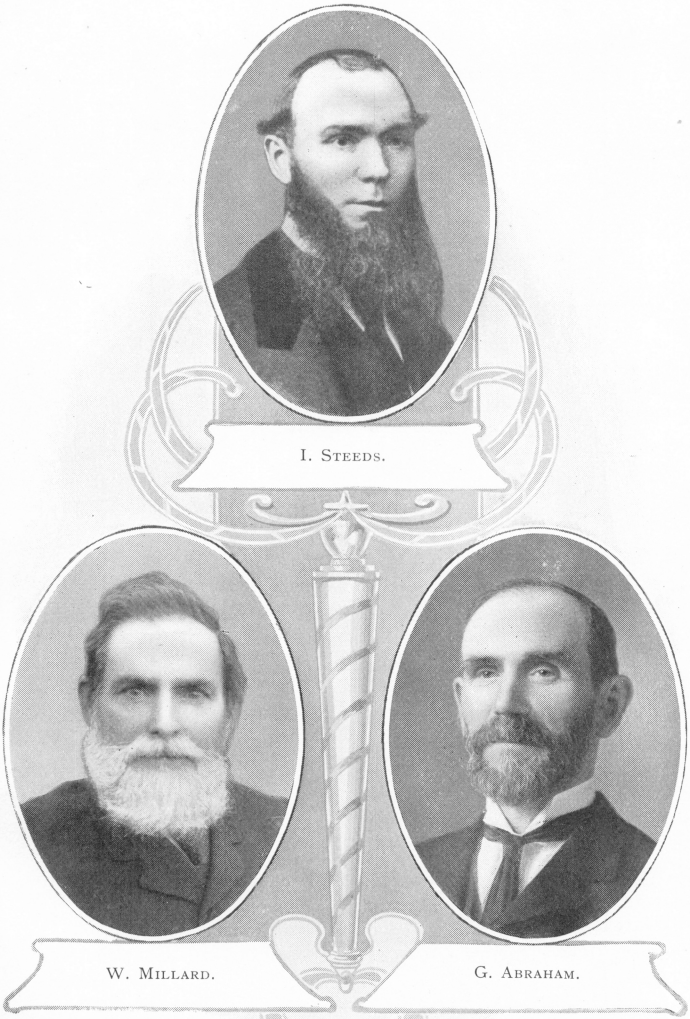
Another difficulty with which the pioneers had to deal was the position of the Store. They found that even a Co-operative Society must have some regard for the convenience of the shopping public. Their shop was at the wrong end of the district, right away from the heart of trade, and all persons are not sufficiently enthusiastic to be loyal Store members when it involves the sacrifice of a little personal convenience. Thus, the question of a more suitable centre for operations was one of their first problems. Indeed, this was seriously debated within two years from the start, for it was suggested as far back as January, 1884, that property might be secured with

advantage in East Street; but the deliberations seem to have been interrupted somewhat owing to a demand which sprang up in the Totterdown district for a Branch shop.

Before leaving West Street, the starting of the Boot Department at the close of 1884 must be mentioned. It was a bold venture, considering the condition of the Society's finances at the time. There was no space to spare in the shop, so the Committee-room was made to serve the purpose. A few boxes and primitive fixtures were set up, and the Committee took turns as salesmen two or three evenings a week, and on Saturdays; for which sacrifice of time they were awarded the sum of 2s. each. In the early days of a Co-operative Society enthusiasm makes up for much that is wanting in hard cash.

The pioneers were very anxious to commence the baking of bread, but where and how they did not know. After some discussion it was decided to approach their landlord with respect to taking over the premises adjoining the Store for the purpose. But he wanted to know what security could be offered for payment of his rent. The negotiations seem to have been taking place near the South Liberty Colliery, for one of the Committee led the gentleman to his back garden, and, pointing to a fat sow and her litter, he said: "There be thy security; if thy rent be not paid, thee can'st ha' my pigs." The premises were accordingly taken, and it is not recorded that the pigs went to the landlord, so evidently the rent was paid. The purchase of flour was the next difficulty to be overcome, for money was scarce, and it was of no use offering pigs as security to a miller. Two of the sturdiest of the Committee were told off to negotiate for supplies. They called upon one miller at Templegate, but were quickly hustled off the premises as undesirable customers, the proprietor remarking that they would not get a sack of his flour, for they were taking an honest living away from his customers. Eventually they found a miller large-minded enough to trust them for four sacks, and they were enabled to make a start.

The Committee soon found that the success or non-success of a Bakery Department depends upon



I. Steeds.

W. Millard.

G. Abraham.

the care and skill of the operator. Their limited means would only permit of a cheap man being appointed to this position, and he proved to be "nasty" also. On one occasion the Committee-room was besieged by angry customers, each bringing more or less dirty specimens of the "staff of life" which had that day been delivered for their consumption. An investigation showed that the mixture for dough that morning had contained two sacks of flour to one sack of dock sweepings, which the baker in his ignorance had picked up as flour from the wharf. There was, of course, a change of bakers, the first of a few which followed, and the Co-operative officials found, as they gained experience, that methods by which a sack of flour may be converted into bread are many and various, corresponding, in fact, to the number of bakers who claim to be experts. The astonishingly bad results which can be obtained from good material are among the mysteries of the trade. Only experience could teach them that sour bread and a dark loaf was not always the fault of yeast and flour; that in the bakery business it is the early man who catches the dough, and an extra half hour in the morning makes all the difference between good and bad bread. These were lessons they had to learn, but, once learned, they were not forgotten. A later generation of Co-operators have profited by the experience of their fathers.

It was in connection with this department, too, that difficulties presented themselves in the purchase of horses. Again experience was dearly bought. Of all the aggravating quadrupeds with which mankind has to contend, surely the horse is the worst—that is, unless you are well versed in the manners of the animal. It seems to have just sufficient intelligence to make you understand that you are an amateur. The varieties of disposition shown by the horses bought by the Bedminster Co-operative Committee were many, but none of them answered the purposes for which the Society parted with its money. One was foolish enough to commit suicide; presumably vexed that he was put out to grass and no fee paid to the owner of the field, he impaled himself on a rusty

piece of iron and put an end to his existence. Incidentally, it had nearly the same effect upon the Society, which, at this stage, could ill afford to lose the value of a horse.

To return to the demand which was made for new premises.

The matter was brought to a head by the members at the Twelfth Quarterly Meeting, July 31st, 1885, when the Committee were definitely instructed to look for a site suitable for Central premises. They were not long in making up their minds, for the next balance sheet reported:—

> The Committee have secured premises in a business thoroughfare, and expect shortly to be in possession of plans and specifications of the new buildings.

These plans were prepared by Mr. J. Reed (at various times Chairman and Treasurer of the Society); and the buildings were erected under his supervision. It is interesting to note that these plans and specifications were exhibited at the National Co-operative Festival at the Crystal Palace, and, in competition with others from all parts of the kingdom, secured first prize.

The new premises, which were situated in East Street, were opened on July 23rd, 1886, in the presence of a number of delegates from neighbouring Societies and a crowd of members. Among others present were the Rev. Canon Percival, M.A., now the Right Rev. the Bishop of Hereford; Mr. Handel Cossham, member of Parliament for East Bristol at the time; Mr. T. Foulkes, Manager of the C.W.S. Depôt at Bristol; and Mr. Pumphrey, C.W.S. Director. At the time of purchase the site was occupied by some old shops facing East Street, and extending along Dean Street, but these could not be adapted to the Society's requirements. The plans and specifications provided for a frontage of 38 feet in East Street and about the same in Dean Street. On the ground floor was placed a large corner shop, 40 feet by 24 feet, and, partitioned off therefrom by a glass screen, a boot shop. The back premises contained a stable and bakehouse. The yard was converted into a covered way for carts. Showrooms and offices were well apportioned on the first floor. Mr.

Walter Jones was the builder, and the total cost, including the price paid for the site, was £1,300.

In declaring the Stores open for business, Canon Percival indulged in some reminiscences dealing with the starting of Co-operation in Bristol. He emphasised the essentially brotherly nature of Co-operation, reminding his hearers that "one of the fundamental principles of their Christian life taught them that they were all members one of another, that they worked for the common good, and that the real fundamental principle of all Co-operative business, and work of that kind, was that they were not acting against one another, but working together for the mutual welfare and benefit of each other. He congratulated the members upon their splendid premises and the better prospects which were before them." Evidently the reverend gentleman was conscious of a great improvement, for, but a year previously, he had administered a sound rebuke to working men for their apathy in respect to Co-operation.

It must not be supposed that the capital necessary for securing this property had been secured without difficulty. Many anxious hours and sleepless nights were spent by the enthusiasts in devising ways and means. One of these individuals went so far as to sell his house in order to lend the money to the Society; and when, at a critical moment, the whole of the negotiations seemed likely to fall through for the lack of a last £100, these resolute working men bound themselves in a deed, duly signed and stamped, "to be jointly and severally responsible for the amount." It is by such material that all great movements are brought to a fruitful issue. The names of these resolute souls deserve to be placed upon record. They were:—

A. Bullock.
A. Butler.
G. Burnell.
G. Chapman.
H. Edbrooke.
J. Edgell.
J. Force.
J. Garrett.
E. Gingell.
I. Hamblin.
J. F. Hopkins.
W. W. Lane.
J. H. Russell.
J. Sparks.
G. Stock.

Just previous to the opening of these new premises the Committee had made up their minds to a radical change in respect to the management; and, after due deliberation on their part, and much hesitancy on his, Mr. E. Gingell, one of their number, was recommended to the members as Manager. At his request the appointment was made the subject for a special meeting of members, and by them he was engaged. For thirteen years he served the Society faithfully and well, severing his connection in 1899 under circumstances which will be detailed in due course.



OFFICIALS OF BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1883-4.



Top Row: Messrs. H. Edbrooke, E. Gingell, G. Burnell, A. E. Bullock, H. Harding, J. Russell, S. Shambrook, J. Sparkes, H. Harse.
Bottom Row: Messrs. E. Edmonds, J. Edgell, J. F. Hopkins, W. W. Lane, J. Hamblin, J. Garrett, J. Forse.

CHAPTER II.

MEANWHILE the fame of Co-operation had spread to other districts. The demand at Totterdown for a Branch shop had only been postponed, and agitation began anew immediately the new premises in East Street were completed. House-to-house canvassing was undertaken by local enthusiasts, meetings were held, and at last the necessary proportion of capital was subscribed. A lease was taken of premises in Henry Street, and the Branch was opened on May 1st, 1887, by the Rev. T. W. Harvey (Vicar of St. Agnes'), a public meeting being held to celebrate the event.

About this time the Penny Bank was instituted, and it was reported that the young Co-operators were depositing at the rate of £1 a week. Some of these depositors are now members of the Society, and recall with pride the first lessons in thrift which they learned from the Co-operative movement.

The old difficulties of management soon made themselves felt at Totterdown, and opinions began to be expressed that an unwise step had been taken in opening the Branch. The Committee seem to have had an extraordinary aptitude for fitting "square men into round holes," and the patience with which they wrestled with the exasperating circumstances arising from incompetent shopmen was truly wonderful. It was magnificent, but it was by no means politic. Quarter after quarter excessive leakages were reported. Gravely our friends discussed the situation, deputation after deputation waited on the shopman, explanations were received and censure passed, but to little or no purpose. Complaints of all kinds were constantly being made as to careless handling of goods, untidy shop, and dilatory methods, but the Committee seemed blind to the indications of incompetency which showered in upon them.

Working men are sometimes charged with treating their fellows harshly when they are placed in a position to employ labour. Such a charge could not have been urged against the Committee at this period, for their patience seems far to have outweighed their discretion.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, however, the trade at Totterdown continued steadily to increase. The small shop was a serious drawback, and, though it was suggested at many of the general meetings that larger premises should be taken, the Committee felt that, for the time being, they had quite sufficient on hand to cope with, and wisely resisted the temptation to increase their responsibilities in respect to building.

The sixth anniversary of the Society was celebrated by a tea and public meeting on October 3rd, 1888, when about 200 persons sat down. It was the custom, in those days, on the occasion of any special function, to invite prominent citizens, who had in any way identified themselves with the movement, to preside, or take some other important part in the ceremony. We have seen that the Church had been thus noticed in the persons of the Rev. Canon Percival and the Rev. T. W. Harvey. On this occasion the law was similarly noticed. The late Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett, who had been one of the first to join the Society, presided at this largely-attended meeting, and in his customary optimistic way expressed his satisfaction at the growing influence and prosperity of Co-operation in Bristol. Other friends attended from Gloucester and elsewhere, notably amongst whom was that genial, warm-hearted Co-operator, Joseph Clay, whose smiling face and hearty welcome won thousands to the movement. A feature of this meeting was the distribution of prizes won by local Co-operators in the Crystal Palace Festival.

Bedminster Co-operators were, from the start, propagandists in spirit, and more or less cosmopolitan in their outlook. And when in 1888 the idea of a National Co-operative Festival was mooted by the wise men from the east—the leaders of metropolitan Co-operation—they readily responded, arranged for excursion trains, trained a choir, and encouraged their members by small grants to

become exhibitors in the Flower Show and Home Industries Exhibition. Their proportion of prizes was usually a good one, the year under review placing them third on the list for the kingdom. For several years these successes continued; and, but for difficulties with railway companies in respect to cheap fares, this excellent stimulus would undoubtedly have been maintained. Unfortunately, however, the organisation of these annual Festival trips depended very largely upon special travelling facilities, and when they were withdrawn the local interest dropped.

The balance sheet of January 31st, 1889, introduced a new principle into the operations of the Store, a method of trading which one is not disposed to regard with any special favour. An arrangement was entered into whereby clothing might be purchased from a certain firm of tailors, the trade to be considered as being done with the Society, and the amount of such purchases was allowed to share in the usual rate of dividend. From time to time other businesses were tapped in the same way, including butchery, drapery, furniture, jewellery, photography, cycles, haircutting and shaving. The system cannot be said to have been a satisfactory one. Nor was it to be expected. The private trader is in business to make profit for himself, and by hook or by crook he must do so or give up. That is an ever-present fact to him, and an influx of new customers is but an aid to his own advancement. For the sake of securing these new customers, if he is a smart business man, it is but natural he will arrange his affairs to accommodate Store members who are looking for " divi." In the large majority of cases the prices paid by individual members are known only to himself and the purchaser, and can be determined accordingly. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that members complained that higher prices were demanded when it was known that purchases were being made through the Society, and the mere fact of any complaints in that direction affords fair reason to presume that overcharges were more or less systematic. The experience of Bedminster Co-operators in this connection has been that of others, and it

indicates the futility of trying to graft the methods of Co-operative trading upon an individualistic stock. One makes no complaint against these traders; they simply obeyed the law which regulates their existence. But, while it may have been urged, and can be maintained by the subsequent course of events, that this was but a step towards the establishment of such departments by the Society, the plain moral is that if you want a thing done well you must do it yourself, and in due course our Bedminster friends thought so too.

During this year something in the nature of educational work was entered upon. With the help of ladies and gentlemen from Clifton, a series of classes was started. The inauguration of the scheme was due very largely to the direct inspiration of the late Mr. Gilmore Barnett; but it does not appear to have been appreciated as well as the promoters might reasonably have expected. The subjects selected were of a high order, including drawing, music, French, arithmetic, the laws of health, and constitutional history; but, as yet, the importance of grappling with the problems of life from the elevated outlook of a cultured mind had not made its appeal to the workers in Bristol, and the classes eventually fell through for lack of adequate support on the part of students. The same fate befell an organised system of Saturday afternoon excursions arranged a year or so later. The time had not yet come for creating a healthy stimulus to take up the great subjects relating to art, literature, and the sciences; but credit is undoubtedly due to those who saw the need for this higher education, and who strove to the best of their ability to make the Co-operative Society the medium for its satisfaction.

The close of the year found the Society in full possession of the whole of the East Street property, which, but two years since, they had held subject to a very substantial mortgage; and it was with pardonable pride that the Committee referred to this in their Twenty-ninth Quarterly Report, emphasising, too, the fact that during the same period no less a sum than £1,600 had been paid as dividend on purchases, besides 5 per cent interest on

all capital invested. With an eye to the spectacular side of things, the deeds were handed over by the solicitor at the anniversary public meeting and tea in January, 1890.

Not a little of the Society's progress in the early days was due to the self-sacrificing efforts and unflagging zeal of its representative officials. Not the least among these was Mr. Ishmael Hamblin. Elected to the position of Treasurer in 1882, he continued to keep watch and ward over the financial interests of the undertaking till April, 1887, when he exchanged offices with Mr. J. F. Hopkins, taking over the no less responsible, but more exacting, duties of Secretary. For three years he gave of his best to the Society's interests, severing his official connection in April, 1890, owing to his having received an appointment as Secretary to the Ashton Vale Iron Company. That he was appreciated by his colleagues is evidenced in the Thirty-first Quarterly Report, where the Committee,

> While rejoicing at his promotion to a position for which they believe him to be eminently qualified, deplore the loss of his valuable services, great ability, and keen business aptitude, which he has earnestly and continuously placed at the disposal of the members, either in the office of Treasurer or Secretary, from the very foundation of the Society.

At the Quarterly Meeting in May the members supplemented this by passing a cordial vote of thanks in the following terms:—

> That the best thanks of this meeting be tendered to Mr. I. Hamblin for his long and honourable connection with the Bedminster Industrial Co-operative Society; for the valuable services he has rendered either as Treasurer or Secretary from its very commencement; and for his earnest efforts to promote and strengthen the cause of Co-operation generally. While sincerely regretting the necessity of his resignation, we most heartily congratulate him upon his appointment to an office for which we believe him to be specially qualified, and trust he may long live to enjoy it.

Mr. Hamblin's interest in the Store has been evidenced in practical form at many a Quarterly Meeting since then; and the members, on more than one occasion, might have congratulated themselves on having the benefit of his sturdy common sense to assist them in their deliberations.

Loyalty to the Store is indispensable for success. One would imagine this should be self-evident to members, but it is not always so, and occasionally the point needs to be emphasised. At this period there was just such a need.

It was claimed, and very reasonably so, that the Society does not exist to provide an investment for the members' savings so much as to supply their material wants. The member who was an investor merely only did half his duty, as it was left for others to provide, by their dealing at the Store, the wherewithal to pay his interest. This is not Co-operation, but the rankest individualism; and, in November, 1890, with a view to equalise matters somewhat, a resolution was passed that in future such investors should only receive 8d. in the £ interest. Whatever the equity of the arrangement, however, suffice it to say that such a step as this was found to be illegal. The sacred rights of property must be inviolate in English law, and, loyal or unloyal, all members continued to receive their full 5 per cent, until eventually the matter was adjusted by the passing of a new rule. At the same time one is bound to point out that great inconsistency prevailed, for, while pressure was being thus brought to bear upon shareholders, loanholders, who were preferential creditors, were receiving a full 5 per cent interest.

The perusal of a minute book generally affords food for reflection; but now and again one lights upon a recorded note, long since forgotten by the people who were most immediately concerned, but full of interest to those who come after them. Thus, it was resolved on one occasion "That a few orders for coal be given to Mr. ——." Who was this Mr. ——? and why should he have the distinction of a minute all to himself? Was it the coals or the man? Were his coals specially delved, and had they some subtle properties which Mr. Somebody else's coals had not? Or can it be that Mr. —— had a friend or friends at court? We cannot satisfy ourselves upon any of these questions, and can but hope that it was to the great advantage of the members that Mr. —— had a few orders for coal,

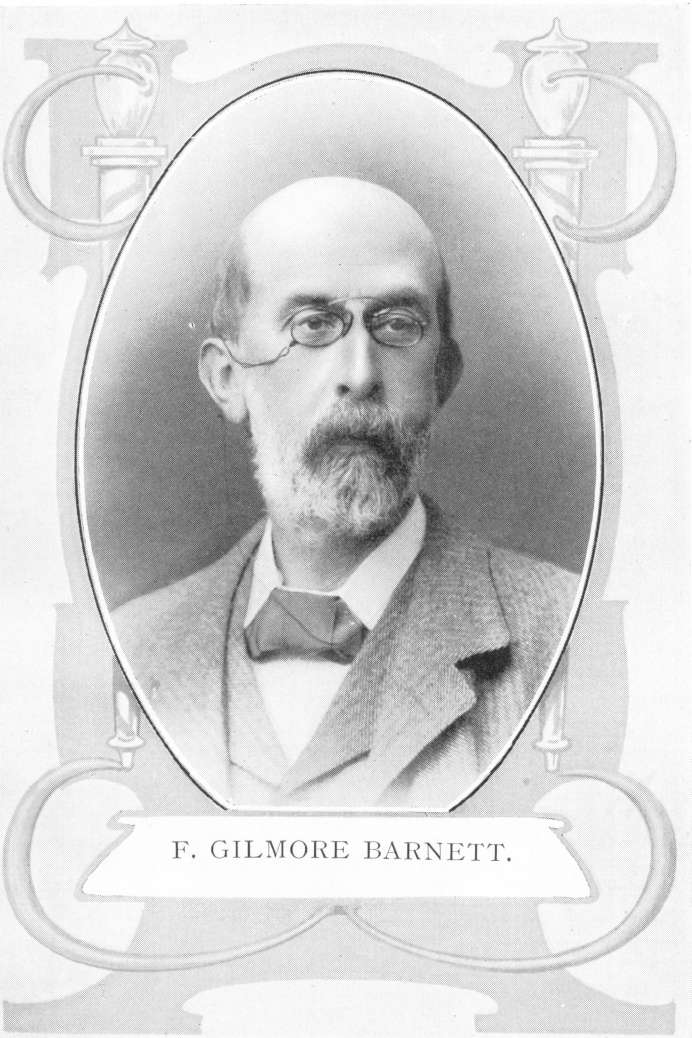
In the matter of tea parties Co-operators excel, and our Bedminster friends were no exception to the general rule. A brief notice of an important change in the dietary is recorded: "That we discontinue having celery or watercress at our teas, and have an extra supply of buns." Evidently someone had an eye to business. Celery and watercress had to be bought, but buns were made at the Society's bakery. Some shrewd member of the Bakery Committee saw a chance of literally making members eat themselves into more profit, and so buns became the rule, to the total eclipse of green stuff. On another occasion there was a wonderful self-denying ordinance agreed to by the Committee. It was recommended that the fees be advanced to 13s. per quarter each, but, as a set-off against this extravagance, and to secure prompt and punctual attendance to duty, it was added that the roll should be called at 7-45 p.m., and members not then present should forfeit that week's salary. Such little human touches throw an interesting sidelight upon the practical, if prosaic, nature of service upon Committees.



CHAPTER III.

IN the year 1891 the Society may fairly be said to have entered upon a new era. In the space of eight years working men and women had established a thoroughly sound commercial undertaking, and, by their joint trading, had accumulated property in the shape of buildings and investments to an amount exceeding £2,000. During the period over £50,000 of trade had been done, and nearly £3,500 had been shared with pur hasers as dividend. The dealings of the Society included groceries and provisions, bread, boots, clothing, and coal, and some attention had been paid to the higher education of the people. The Penny Bank for juveniles was being well supported, the deposits totalling over £147.

Hitherto Co-operative effort had concerned itself chiefly with the supply of household commodities. The Co-operators had successfully negotiated the purchase of two blocks of property for the convenient and economical conduct of their business, and now it occurred to some that they might safely extend their operations in this direction—that what had been done for the Society as a whole might also be done for the Society as individuals. In short, it was proposed to add house purchase to the dealings of the Society. Recourse was had to Mr. Gilmore Barnett, who pointed out that further special rules were necessary, and within a few months these were forthcoming. Amongst others, Mr. Barnett was hopeful that the scheme might be made applicable to the whole of Bristol, and he expressed his disappointment that it was not done; but this was felt to be too big a venture. The Committee who drew up the rules did so with a view of limiting the operations of the department to the members of the Society. In May, 1891, a special meeting



F. GILMORE BARNETT.

of members was convened to discuss and pass the new rules, which, in addition to permitting the Society to buy for members houses already built, also provided for the further possibility that the Society might enter upon the building of houses, becoming producers as well as distributors of house property. Thus Rule 17 was as follows:—

Clause 1.—The Society may, through its Committee, subject only to such restrictions and limitations as shall from time to time be imposed by resolution of members, passed at a Quarterly Meeting, purchase any lands, together with the buildings thereon, and may build or erect any houses or other buildings for the purposes of the Society; and any buildings erected or purchased by the Society shall be disposed of to the members by ballot.

Clause 2.—As soon as any plans of any building shall have been certified by the proper authorities, a notice shall be posted in each place of business of the Society, giving a description of the class or classes of buildings proposed to be erected, and of the locality in which they are situated; also of the estimated cost of each class of house to be allotted; but if there be more than one class of houses to be disposed of at the same time each member shall state which class of house he will enter his name for.

Clause 4.—Every member having an allotment shall deposit, or have previously deposited, not less than 5 per cent of the estimated cost of such allotment. All expenses attending the allotment to be added to the cost of the property.

Advances were to be made subject to certain scales of repayment of principal and interest, as is usual in Building Societies. Valuers were to be appointed from the members, and the management of the fund was to be in the hands of the General Committee for the time being.

This department reached its zenith in 1900, at which time property valued at about £1,700 had been mortgaged to the Society by its members.

During 1890–91 Co-operators in Bristol began seriously to concern themselves about the support—or, rather, the lack of support—which was forthcoming from their colleagues in the sister movement, the trade unions. A deputation accordingly waited upon the Trades Council on February 5th, 1891, to place the claims of Co-operation before the delegates there assembled. Though it was reported that they were favourably received, and

that their representations were considered to be of a satisfactory nature, there does not appear to have been much practical result immediately issuing from the interview. One of the Trades Council delegates, voicing, no doubt, the real sentiment of many of his fellows in the press a few days later, took a somewhat pessimistic view as to the value of Co-operation to benefit the actual industrial workers; the obvious retort being supplied by the Secretary of the Society, who replied, inviting the critic to press his criticisms from within instead of from without the Society. Valuable results might have accrued had this sensible piece of advice been taken at the time, for it is not at all clear that Co-operators were without blame in their attitude towards labour and labour movements just then. It is significant, for instance, that in March of the same year they politely but firmly declined to have anything to do with the promotion of a Women's Trade Union Society; and, while it is true their reforms aimed at reducing the hours of labour to shop employés, the concessions made were none too liberal. A reduction in February, 1891, still left the official working hours at 67½ per week, notwithstanding the ideal that had long existed for an eight-hour working day.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that extremists of each movement should have been quick to see the faults of the other, for, in spite of a certain class consciousness, the average British working man is fairly imbued with the conceit of his race, which hides from himself his own, but reveals the weaknesses of his neighbour. The average working man, it is true, esteems his class; but it is curious to note how readily he sets aside his class sympathies when responsible for the spending of other people's money; and it is due to a somewhat pardonable reluctance to make incursion into the unknown field of reform which has on more than one occasion brought Co-operators and trade unionists into conflict. Co-operative administrators, with their keen desire to make the business pay, have to some extent been satisfied with the standard set by the competitive market in respect to wages and hours of labour. Trade unionists, taking

note of this, and unmindful of many other estimable virtues of the Co-operative movement, have "hied them to their tents," there to declaim against the system which forces men to become merely parts of a social machine, in which expediency is reckoned of more account than righteousness.

But such inaction brings the solution of the problem no nearer. These same individuals, it cannot be doubted, would act in a very similar manner under similar circumstances. The responsibility inseparable from employment of labour would act upon them to a like degree; and, without some additional influence, in all probability their zeal for labour would become dimmed by the new responsibilities as employers. The only counter influence is education; and at that time neither trade unionists nor Co-operators as a whole were sufficiently enamoured of this essential. One cannot have a better illustration of the absorbing power of a new environment than the halting attitude of the Committee. On one occasion, when the question of alliance with the master bakers and master grocers was under consideration, for a whole evening the matter was discussed without a definite decision being arrived at; and after adjournment thus it was agreed to stand aloof, reserving the right to move with either of them when occasion required. A more inept and fatuous proceeding cannot be imagined, if regarded from a strictly Co-operative point of view, for what business have elected representatives of the people to do with schemes which, in their essence, are conspiracies against the people? By such actions as these one is forced to the conclusion that logic is not the strong point of our working people, but expediency is bred in their bones.

It may, perhaps, be well to anticipate a little at this point, for during the past few years an alteration has come over the attitude of trade unionists and Co-operators towards one another; and, speaking generally, these two movements now work on lines which seem to be hastening towards a convergence. Co-operators in Bristol, at any rate, accept trade union conditions for their employés, and their procedure is largely influenced by the dominance

of members sitting on the Trades Council. The Bedminster Co-operators seem to have had more than an ordinary share of attention from trade union leaders; and it is fitting, therefore, that the course of this evolution may here be traced to its consummation.

The next stage in the controversy occurred in 1892, when the Society was tackled on the question of paying overtime to the bakers. An extraordinary boom had taken place in the Bread Department, and the Committee, objecting to the principle of overtime, sought to compromise by making a small grant as a recompense to three men who had thus worked.

Amongst other matters, this was made the pretext for another joint conference of representatives from the two movements, this time held at Mr. Gilmore Barnett's house. The special question at issue was referred thence to a Joint Committee, to be elected from the Bakers' Union and the Society, which, after due deliberation, passed the following resolution on September 7th, 1892:—

> That this meeting is of opinion that the best interests of Co-operators and trade unionists in this city can be best advanced by a friendly spirit being entertained by these two great forces, and they hereby agree to advance the highest and best claims of their respective organisations by bringing the advantages before their members with a view to making the movements co-extensive in Bristol.

This resolution, it is evident, was the outcome of a sincere desire on the part of the disputants to co-operate upon a practical basis, and marked a distinct advance in the relations between the two movements.

That the Co-operators were thoroughly in earnest is shown by their action a month or so later in approaching the Early Closing Association in respect to hours worked by the shop assistants; a reply was received to the effect that the grocers' representative had stated that the hours worked by Co-operative employés "were from eight to nine hours per week shorter than the average of the locality."

But prejudices die hard, and the aspersions which had been cast upon the Co-operative movement lingered for years in the minds of many trade unionists. From

time to time echoes of the controversy were heard in the Trades Council meetings. Occasionally more or less vague charges made their appearance in the columns of the local press. Particularly was this so during Congress year, 1893, when the subject of employés' conditions in the movement were specially under review.

It was only natural that the good feeling which the Conference of 1892 seemed to foreshadow should lapse, and an indifference take its place. But in 1898, while Mr. J. O'Grady, now the energetic Labour M.P. for Leeds, was President of the Trades Council, the whole question was raised again, and, after much recrimination and many conferences, finally laid to rest.

It would appear that the Co-operators invited the challenge. In November, 1897, a deputation from the two local Co-operative Societies waited upon the Trades Council with a view to interesting its members more practically in the sister movement, and it was felt that the meeting had done good. At the next meeting of the Trades Council a charge was laid by the Bakers' Union that "the Bedminster Co-operative Society was working its men fifteen hours a day for 2s. 6d.; that the Society was not paying trade union rates; that it had dismissed union men and put on non-unionists at 21s. per week; moreover, that the hours worked were seventy-five per week, or three hours in excess of the regulations." Countenance was given to these statements and others, the Chairman summing up the discussion by saying that "the Committee were not to blame. The Co-operatives were not true Co-operatives—they were only seeking dividend." This meeting was duly reported in the local press, and promptly a vigorous rejoinder was made by the Secretary of the Society as follows:—

The charges made are so inaccurate and misleading that we are compelled to reply to them, in order that the Society's reputation for fair and honest dealing may be maintained.

Statement No. 1.—That the Bedminster Co-operative Society was working its men fifteen hours a day for 2s. 6d. The best reply to this statement is to repeat the facts as given by Mr. Huntingdon at the meeting in question.

Proper Rate of Wages as quoted by Mr. Waters (the Bakers' representative):—

Foreman.	2nd Hand.	3rd Hand.	4th Hand.	Youth.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.
1 10 0 ...	1 6 0 ...	1 2 0 ...	....	.....

Rate of Wages paid by the Bedminster Society:—

Foreman.	2nd Hand.	3rd Hand.	4th Hand.	Youth.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.
1 16 0 ...	1 6 6 ...	1 3 0 ...	1 0 0 ...	15 0

The number of hours worked is 75. We are told the regulation number is 72; so that in this respect we are above the regulation. This is caused by the rapidly-increasing trade, which demands an output almost beyond the capacity of our oven accommodation. But steps are being taken to increase the capacity by building extra ovens, which will enable us to modify the number of hours worked, for we are quite as desirous to shorten the hours as the unionists are.

Statement No. 2.—" The officials have been advised of the fact, but nothing has been done." The officials deny ever having received any proper notification of these alleged delinquencies, and I, as Secretary, have never received any written communication touching this matter either from the Bakers' Association or the Trades Council.

Statement No. 3.—" That the Society had sacked union men, and put on non-union men at 21s. per week." This we deny. No man was ever discharged by this Society because he was a unionist. Men have been discharged for inefficiency or neglect of duty, but never for being a unionist. If Mr. Waters thinks that the services of any man should be retained, no matter what his shortcomings, simply because he is a unionist, well—we don't do our business on those lines.

Statement No. 4.—Mr. Waters said " That the same week that the deputation waited on the Council the men's wages were raised to what they were now." The deputation referred to were representatives of the Bedminster and Bristol and District Societies, who waited upon the Council to introduce the subject of distributive Co-operation, with a view to bringing about a more sympathetic feeling between the two movements. We were pleased with the courteous reception and patient hearing we received, and came away feeling that our mission had not been in vain. Now Mr. Waters informs us that we ran away home and raised the men's wages at once; but this, like the foregoing statements, is not true. Our custom is to consider applications for advances in wages in March and September each year. Our bakers applied for an advance at the end of September, which was considered early in October, and granted in consideration of the extra hours worked by them. This was before we knew anything of the proposed meeting with the Trades Council, which was held on November 25th. We received an invitation to attend the

meeting on November 2nd, so that our attendance at that meeting could have no possible influence over the rise in the bakers' wages.

Now, sir, I have already, I fear, taken up too much of your valuable space, but I should like to make one other reference in conclusion. It is that we consider it most unreasonable that we should be expected to conform to regulations that have never been submitted to us; that local customs are not taken into consideration; and that union men work for us without complaint, including the Secretary of the Bakers' Association, who worked in our bakery and submitted to our hours without protest. If you ask any of these men: What are the regulation hours and union rate of wages? they don't appear to know, for the statements we have received differ very much. There certainly appears to be a sad want of organisation with this Association, and my advice is: Put your own house in order before you presume to dictate to others what they should do or not do. We are always ready to receive any suggestions for our consideration sent in proper form; to receive a deputation if desired to do so, or to consider the rules of the Association, if there are any. It is astonishing that this Association, with many of its members professedly Co-operators, should give ear to many false and malicious misstatements that may be brought before it without troubling to ascertain from the proper source whether or not the statements can be substantiated by actual facts.

A. BULLOCK,
Secretary, Bedminster Co-operative Society.

The publication of this letter brought a deputation from the Trades Council, consisting of Messrs. J. O'Grady, J. Curle, J. Sharland, and J. T. Huntingdon, when explanations were made upon both sides. The Committee of the Society had to admit that they were not in possession of the whole facts when the Secretary was instructed to write his letter, but explained that "the overtime worked is now paid for at the proper rate," and promised, when the list of wages and hours was received, that special attention should be given that all the requirements might be fully and properly complied with.

"It never rains but it pours." Not only the bakery, but the Boot Department came in for a share of attention from the trade unionists just then, for at the following Quarterly Meeting Mr. J. O'Grady moved, and Mr. John Curle seconded—

That the report and balance sheet be adopted subject to the condition that the Committee undertake to consider and report upon the management of and the wages paid in the Boot Department next quarter.

In due time the report was presented, but, in the meantime, the mischief-maker, one of the least satisfactory of the employés, had been dispensed with.

In the March following, the office of President becoming vacant, Mr. John Curle (Secretary of the Trades Council) was elected to the post, and some prominent trade union leaders were elected to the Committee. Thus, after eight years, the suggestion made by Mr. Hopkins to the critics, "that they should press their views from within rather than from without," was accepted, and, from this time forward, the two bodies have worked harmoniously in Bristol, the leaders of one very often being the leaders of the other. It is interesting to note that while trade union official leaders remained aloof from active part in Co-operation these more or less vague insinuations were accepted by many trade unionists, and perhaps by some Co-operators, as undoubted facts; but no such question has arisen since there has been fraternal co-operation between the two bodies. It shows the value of personal contact between reforming sections of the people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE thread of our story may now be taken up again. During 1891 trade began to boom, and it was found necessary to extend the accommodation. The East Street shop had to be enlarged, and the boots and shoes, which had been stocked in the Committee-room over the grocery shop, were transferred to the next door premises, the tenant being called upon to vacate them in September. By this arrangement it was possible to give adequate room for the Boot-repairing department at the rear of the shop. The whole of these alterations were left in the hands of Mr. J. Reed, Chairman at the time, who undertook to keep a record of time spent on the job, and submit to the Committee at the finish. In connection with these alterations a nice point arose owing to a recommendation from the Committee that the cost of the additions should be added to the value of the building; their object was to spread the somewhat heavy expenses incurred over future quarters by means of ordinary methods of depreciation. This method, however, was not hailed with universal satisfaction, the late Secretary protesting that one effect of the proposal would be to cover up a weak spot, and disguise the necessity for strong depreciation and reserves. Eventually, however, the Committee's recommendation was passed by one vote—a somewhat doubtful victory.

Meanwhile, the Branch at Totterdown, notwithstanding internal difficulties, continued to forge ahead.

The close of the year foreshadowed quite a number of problems which were destined to have a very material bearing upon the future progress of the Society. Amongst others was the question of extension, both locally and also, more important still, outside the city boundary.

Further alterations at East Street and at Totterdown were imminent, and will be dealt with hereafter, but just then a striking activity manifested itself on the very outskirts of the Society's operations at Long Ashton. Enthusiastic hopes ran high, tea meetings were held in the district, and at one time it looked as though a Branch Store was going to be established in this little hamlet; but other matters intervened, and the movement in that direction ceased for a time.

This seems to have been one of the many evidences of propagandist fervour which characterised the period under review. A most important resolution was passed at the Quarterly Meeting in November, that a portion of the educational funds should be set apart for district organisation. Excellent Co-operative sentiment this, and one which reflects the utmost credit upon those who were responsible for the suggestion. It is probable that Mr. Hopkins had something to do with the idea, but there were contributors outside the Society. A letter was read from a prominent official at the docks asking that steps be taken to form a Co-operative Store at Avonmouth, and, as will be seen in another part of this book, the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society was part of the first fruits of the new movement. A few weeks later an appeal was received from a few cabinet-makers in Bath to come over and help them to form a Productive Society. Mr. Hopkins was sent, and the Bath Co-operative Society owes something of its start to the missionary enterprise of Bedminster Co-operators.

The Bristol and District Society, just then grappling with serious problems of its own, although invited to take part in this business of district organisation, refused the call, so that to the Bedminster Co-operators alone belongs the honourable mention for the initiation of Co-operative missionary work by Bristolians.

The question of bonus to employés has long troubled the peace of certain sections of the Co-operative movement. In the early nineties there was much controversy as to the propriety of Co-operative employés sharing in

profits. The agitation was a tribute to the best Co-operative sentiment. The method usually suggested, and generally adopted, was that of allocating a definite percentage of the net profits quarterly or half yearly, to be divided among the employés in the proportion of wage earning. Many of the most eminent leaders in the movement, including Messrs. E. V. Neale, E. O. Greening, and G. J. Holyoake, supported the theory that profit, alike in the workshop and the distributive Store, is the exclusive property of none of the factors ordinarily considered as having contributed to it; that capital, labour, and custom—particularly the two latter—are entitled to consideration. On the other hand, it was urged that in Co-operative methods of trading, profit, as understood in ordinary commercial transactions, is non-existent. The buyer and seller being in truth the same individual, any surplus which remains on the transaction after all legitimate expenses have been met is that which, for convenience sake, has been paid in excess of the true value, and should be returned whence it came, viz., to the purchaser.

The Bedminster Co-operators leaned towards the bonus system; and in November, 1891, the Quarterly Meeting declared itself favourable to the principle; although a few months later, as a kind of check to naughtiness, and, it must be pointed out, in direct contradiction of the theory that labour has a right to this portion of profit, it resolved that "no bonus be paid to an employé who is discharged for neglect of duty."

The new year, 1892, opened in an auspicious manner, it being pleasurably recorded of the New Year's Party "that it was of a social character, the wives and the sweethearts of the members being present, and they partook of a substantial repast. Singing and recitations before and after supper." One can have but little sympathy with the churlishness of a member who, a month or so later, because of the smallness of profits, complained of the excessive amount paid for teas. Evidently the other members were not similarly distressed, for he obtained no support. The common weal and

friendly intercourse have always been features productive of good in the service of mankind, and these functions alone stamp the Co-operative movement with a touch of the ideal, removing its material aims from the realm of mere sordid commercialism.

In the early part of 1892 it became absolutely necessary to secure more accommodation for the bakery. Accordingly, inquiries were set on foot as to whether the three cottages in Dean Street, then adjoining the Society's premises, could be bought. Without giving anyone outside a hint of their project, the Committee commissioned their Chairman (Mr. J. Reed) to take the negotiations in hand. This he did, and, after interviewing the owner at Bridgwater, succeeded in coming to terms, securing the cottages and ground for the sum of £600. The members endorsed this action at the Quarterly Meeting following, and extensions were immediately put in hand.

About this time an attempt was made to link up the ideas of Friendly Society members with the Co-operative movement. Good work in the provision of medical advice and dispensing of medicine for the wives and children of members had for some years been done by the Rationals, a Friendly Society which can trace its inspiration back to Robert Owen. Something of a similar nature was suggested in connection with the Co-operative Society. Circulars were printed and some 10,000 distributed, but the scheme was not taken up; it was probably felt that there was an element of overlapping.

The purchase of the Dean Street property appears to have stayed further developments at Ashton Gate, for the minute book records in April that a question of property in that district could not be entertained.

We are enlightened as to the methods of bookkeeping by a letter which the Auditors (Messrs. E. T. Morgan and J. A. E. Jones) addressed to the Committee on May 17th, 1892. It was as follows:—

1. That the Secretary keep a ledger in which all *contra* accounts are entered, to be ruled off as accounts are paid; also that a book be kept in which all empties returned are entered, and from which

the amounts should be posted to the separate accounts. The present system is far from satisfactory, the Auditors having to take everything for granted, and if an account was passed for payment twice there is nothing to prevent its being paid.

2. That a form be printed asking the various firms with whom we have business relations to render a statement of all outstanding accounts against us up to a given date, also particulars of all goods waiting our orders and particulars of teas in bond. Such statements to be addressed "The Auditors," to enable them to check the accounts entered in ledger. At present a statement of outstanding accounts is presented to the Auditors, but we have no other means of ascertaining if the Society owes £30 or £1,000. We believe your Committee will see the necessity of this suggestion, and insist on its adoption.

3. That each employé sign for wage received.

4. That the debts owing to the Society be given a separate place on the balance sheet, and not included with stock as at present. We trust you will see that this is done with reference to the balance sheet about to be issued.

5. That the stock books as arranged are not satisfactory, and that some person with a knowledge of figures should have the extending of same.

6. In looking over the coal account we find that no discount has been allowed. Are we quoted exceptional terms, or can we buy as good an article of another company who will remit a discount of, say, 5 per cent ?

7. The terms for the flour account appear to be cash less 3d. per sack, whereas the terms of the trade are one month less 3d. per sack. We would suggest that the Secretary render a statement of accounts paid in the past, and ask for a remittance of the one month's discount.

8. That some one beside the Manager check the cash each day, it being at present quite possible for a larger amount to be paid in than that shown by the check books.

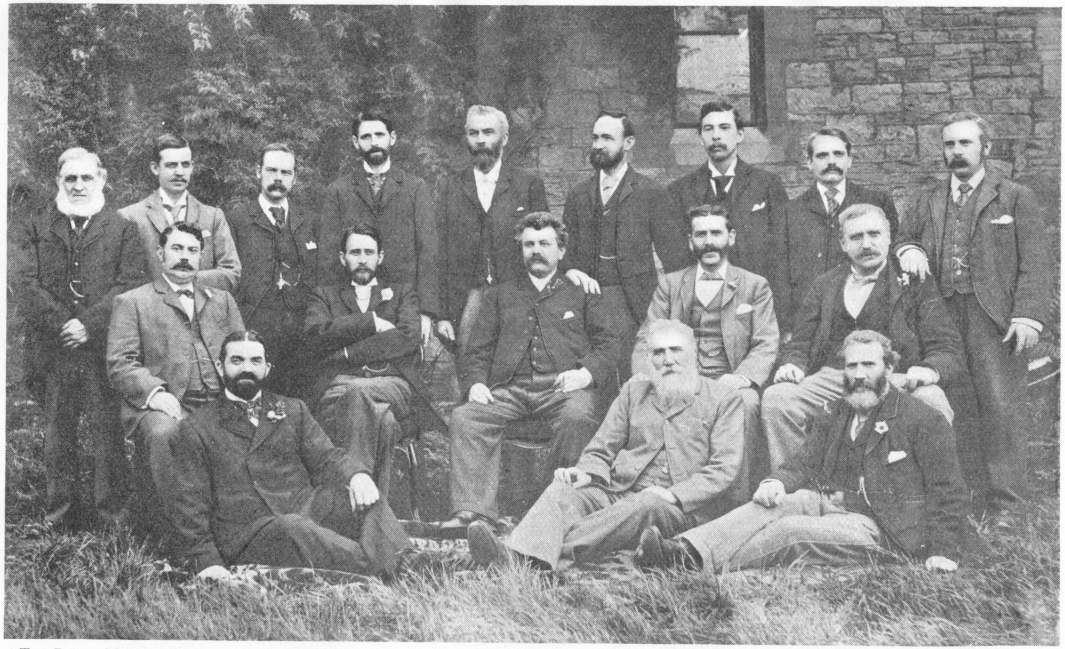
The proposals were considered by the Committee and practically accepted, but it was curiously enough considered necessary to resolve that the certificate relating to outstanding accounts with merchants should be sent to the Store, not to the Auditors.

It is sometimes urged by the opponents of Co-operation that Directors' fees have the effect of unduly inflating the prices of commodities sold at Co-operative Stores. Obviously, if this were true, the private trader has little to fear from the movement. His superior methods

could not fail to recommend themselves to the intelligence of the public. But this is just one of those little fictions which have no foundation in fact, as reference to Societies' balance sheets will show. In all cases these emoluments of office are absurdly low; in the early stages of a Society's existence they are *nil*. The enthusiasm of pioneers is easily maintained by the knowledge that their services are contributing towards the establishment of a definite work of social reconstruction, in which the ultimate benefits to be secured outweigh present material considerations. This was the position at Bedminster—in fact, at each of the Bristol Societies. The early Committee-men worked for no fee or reward, except the consciousness of doing their duty.

But working men Co-operators are not disposed to patronage, either from their own or another class. They like to feel perfect freedom to praise or blame—too often, possibly, the latter. And it is the members who settle the question of fees when the time is ripe. It is quite customary to explain that the 3d. or 6d. per week is in no sense to be regarded as a salary, but a slight recognition for services rendered. In Bedminster, however, they had no such scruples. These fees were spoken of as Committee's salaries, and in 1892 had reached the magnificent sum of 6d. per meeting per head, with a slightly larger amount for officials. In the March of that year it was thought that this might very well be increased. Accordingly, the Committee suggested that an advance might be conceded, the President 10s., Secretary 20s., Treasurer 20s., and the Committee 30s. per quarter. The members were by no means favourable, although they passed the recommendation.

GENERAL COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS OF BEDMINSTER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1897.



Top Row: Messrs. G. Burnell, C. Halliday, C. A. Poole, W. B. Griffin, J. Halfyard, B. Hollings, J. Marks, J. Forse, W. H. Brooks.
Second Row: Messrs. E. Gingell (*Manager*), J. Mortimer (*Treasurer*), J. F. Hopkins (*President*), A. E. Bullock (*Secretary*), H. J. Pope.
Third Row: Messrs. J. E. Button, J. I. Huntingdon, J. Garrett.

CHAPTER V.

WITH all their Sub-Committees and specially appointed buyers, our friends occasionally had unsaleable stock on hand. Many there are, doubtless, who even now can remember the deal in spectacles, and the frantic and altogether fruitless efforts which were made to dispose of them. They must have been far-seeing people indeed who invested the Society's funds in that stock, but their successors did not wait for customers to mature; they offered the whole parcel at a giving-away price to a Bristol specialist, who declined with thanks. What eventually became of them is not recorded, but it is most probable that what were bought for sale, and profit for use to the old, were ultimately sold with loss, for play to the young.

The division of a General Committee into Sub-Committees, in order that the elected representatives of the members may get into the closest possible touch with the details of the Society's business, is a matter which calls for careful discrimination. Usually these Sub-Committees are appointed according to trade departments, a rough classification which in general practice has been found to work fairly satisfactorily. At Bedminster, till 1892, this plan had not been adopted in its entirety, their Sub-Committees being Buying, Finance, and Educational. But it was being found that this division unequally distributed the work. Accordingly it was determined that there should be two Sub-Committees only, No. 1 and No. 2, responsible for trade and finance respectively, education being left to find representation under either head, according to the nature of the business in hand. This system did not work smoothly, and was soon dispensed with, it being arranged that the whole Committee should meet twice instead of once a week as heretofore.

An interesting controversy arose as to the educational work. Unquestionably, under the old method, good

work had been attempted, as has been already indicated; but it is doubtful whether sufficient organising power had been brought to bear upon the problem, so far as the Committee themselves were concerned. Their chief care was something to them of a very practical kind—the increase of trade and profits; and it is scarcely surprising that, disheartened by the poor response to their endeavours to interest their fellows in higher education, they utilised the educational funds for the propagation of that ideal most dear to them—the extension of Co-operative trading. In this it would seem they were perfectly justified, according to their lights. But it is evident some of the members were not satisfied with the process of making automatic Co-operators; and, led by Mr. W. Lane, a former President, pressed for a separate Committee, with a view to bringing more concentrated effort to bear upon the definite principle which underlay the outward show of Co-operative trading. These reforms do not appear to have been successful just then, though it is only fair to add they but anticipated the reorganisation which took place a few years later.

A more successful forward movement taken in this year was the projection of a branch of the Women's Guild. In October a conference was held at Newfoundland Road under the joint auspices of the Bristol and District and Bedminster Societies, the result of which was to impress the minds of the leaders as to the advisability of promoting a local branch at Bedminster. Nothing definite was done till the Quarterly Meeting on December 3rd, when the Committee, with extreme caution, foreshadowed the probability of a branch of the Women's Guild being started. No opposition being forthcoming, at the next Committee meeting it was decided to pay for the necessary printing, and grant £1 towards the expenses of its formation. This was soon arranged, and without doubt the step then taken was a most important one in its bearing upon the future of the Society.

One would have thought that the poor response made by the members to the Committee's proposals respecting increased salaries, as recorded in the last chapter, would

have deterred any step being taken in a similar direction for some time to come; but probably the rearrangement of Sub-Committees opened up new responsibilities, and once again the question was considered. This time it was an official's question. It was proposed to appoint a Finance Secretary at £3 per quarter, the Correspondence Secretary to be paid £2, and the Treasurer £1. 10s. The Committee were divided in opinion, and the members were not sufficiently capable of judging either way, for the question was adjourned from the Quarterly Meeting. Eventually the matter was referred to the Co-operative Union for their direction and advice. By them the multiplication of Secretaries was unhesitatingly condemned. Instead, it was suggested that a permanent cashier be appointed under a guarantee bond, with duties sharply defined. It was accordingly decided that the chief clerk should be constituted cashier for the Society.

One cannot but think that some personal feeling began to exhibit itself amongst the prominent officials about this time. There certainly was not the same unanimity existing as had been the case twelve months previously. The question of compiling a short history of the Society for the Congress Guide was discussed in December, 1892, and, not without some dissent, it was decided to leave this matter in the hands of Mr. Hopkins. It seems inconceivable that there should have been any question at all about the matter. Mr. Hopkins was the literary man of the Society, he was the official reporter for the *Co-operative News*, and none better than he knew the course of the Society's history. It seems tolerably certain that there were some envious folk about.

But what is more astonishing is a deprecating and humiliating resolution which appears in the minute book for the period. Some progressive soul had suggested that the Co-operative Society should memorialise the Lord Chancellor to appoint working men magistrates. This suggestion was negatived in consequence of the "difficulty of finding a proper and suitable man." It is quite impossible to account for this narrow and spiritless attitude

unless by the assumption that mutual jealousies obscured the merit of each from the other. This was in January, 1893. It is pleasing to notice that the phase was but a temporary one. Towards the end of March the position was reviewed, and Mr. Huntingdon was put forward as a candidate for the honour and responsibility of the aforesaid post.

In the early part of this year the rules were amended. There are periods in the history of most Societies when the atmosphere seems charged with a kind of magnetism, keeping people in a perpetual state of feverish fretfulness. This appears to have been such a time. All kinds of fractious amendments were sent in, many of them after the rules had been passed at a Special Meeting in February. But the Quarterly Meeting in March, after considerable discussion, decided that the matter should not be reopened. In the main, the difficulties appear to have centred round the rule which governed the education fund.

It will be remembered that Mr. Lane and a few friends had appealed for a separate Educational Committee, but without success. In these rules provision was made for this, but the Secretary of the Society had always to be an *ex-officio* member, and the General Committee had the right of veto. The rule was passed, notwithstanding hot protests from the agitators, who would be satisfied with nothing less than sole control. This halting solution indicates the usual fondness for compromise. Such attempts to please all parties rarely succeed in placating any, and this one was no more successful than the average. The controversy continued until the next alteration of rules, when the reformers got their way at last.

This Quarterly Meeting was a particularly disagreeable one. Besides the controversy respecting the rules there were strong expressions of feeling against the publication of the Society's affairs in the *Trade Union Review*, and the circulation of that journal by the Society's officials. It is evident that members were " touchy " in respect to trades unionism, and showed their resentment to the Committee's policy in the only way open to them. One of the

oldest members of the Committee, Mr. Garrett, lost his seat, and others only retained theirs by reason of the official nature of their duties. The record rather significantly states that the meeting terminated at 10-40 p.m.

The loss of Mr. Garrett from the Committee raised a question of more than ordinary importance. From early days it had been customary to appoint one of the Committee as the official buyer for the Society. Of late the selection had fallen upon Mr. Garrett. One of the first necessities, therefore, after the Quarterly Meeting, was to appoint his successor. The method of procedure does not seem to have been very logical. First it was decided that a buyer should be appointed at a salary; then considerable discussion ensued, in which it was pointed out that the buying had not been successful under this system, and this resulted in the three officers being appointed Managing Directors. The following week this was again modified by the appointment of a Sub-Committee to buy and to fix the selling prices.

It is evident from this vacillation that some doubt existed as to the wisdom of appointing official buyers at all from among the Committee. The common sense of the matter would seem to point to the necessity of a responsible paid official to supervise this important function, and who so obviously fitted as the chief employé? However, the final arrangement resulted in the Secretary being appointed supervisor. He was to be appealed to by the Manager when important purchases were to be made, a method having the supreme advantage of fixing real responsibility upon nobody.

This was Congress year, and Co-operative activities were naturally enlivened by the spectacle of delegates from all parts of the United Kingdom deliberating in Bristol city. Public attention in Bristol was drawn to the movement as it had never been before, and the doings of local Co-operators were scrutinised severely in the light of utterances of prominent representative speakers at the Congress. The usual small talk appeared in the local press, but this was promptly disposed of by the officials of the Society.

Preparations for entertaining Congress began in April, 1892, when £15 was set aside to form the nucleus of a fund to be expended as occasion required. Subsequent sums were added from succeeding quarters' profits, bringing the total of £50, a by no means inconsiderable sum in those days, but one which was freely and spontaneously granted. During the Congress week, all sections of the Society took part in welcoming the guests, the Women's Guild Branch earning special praise for its expert assistance.

Immediately after Congress the Committee set about reaping a harvest from the seed which had been sown. Self-denying ordinances for themselves, and devices for the promotion of zeal in others, made their appearance in the minute book. Discipline in the Committee-room is as essential as discipline in the shop, and so it was recorded that

> No Committee-man shall leave the room during business without the sanction of the Chairman. Anyone infringing this rule to have the attendance mark for that evening cancelled; also each Committee-man addressing the meeting must rise to his feet.

This last injunction may have afforded excellent practice for public debate, but strikes one as being the " madness " of formality in the Committee-room. It may have been that feeling ran high in Committee discussions, and this rising to one's feet was intended as a sobering influence, the clearer upper air operating as a kind of douche to mental excitability.

Employés were exhorted to further endeavour; a copy of the *Co-operative News* was presented to each weekly, with a request to push the sale, and an extra ¼ per cent bonus offered if trade increased from £300 to £350 per week at the Central, and from £100 to £115 at the Branches. A Women's Guild Conference was visited by the Chairman and Secretary, and opportunity taken to press the claims of Co-operative productions upon the household chancellors of the exchequer. Seed sown in this way could not be altogether fruitless, and it is pleasing to know that a better demand arose for the Co-operative journal, and the ethical considerations

attaching to Co-operative trading from this time steadily increased their hold on the Society.

At the Quarterly Meeting in July, 1893, the Committee were empowered to purchase another block of buildings for £1,540. This was one of the most favourable purchases the Society had made. The property had an extensive frontage to the main thoroughfare in the centre of trading operations in Bedminster, viz., 127-129, East Street, with a good depth fronting Church Road. At the back was an old malthouse. The buildings were largely tenanted by quarterly tenants. A plan was prepared and elevation drawn of the whole block, and Mr. R. Slaughter was entrusted with the task of preparing a complete scheme for developing the site. The plans were arranged in such a manner that the building could be proceeded with by instalments as the leases fell in. It was in Church Road that the scheme first took shape, and the property has ever since been known by that title. The immediate necessity was felt to be better accommodation for the Boot and Shoe Department, and at the same time it was resolved to have good workrooms erected for a Tailoring and Outfitting Department.

The close of the year 1893 saw the miners engaged in one of their periodical struggles with the mine owners. Into the merits of that struggle it is not necessary here to enter; but the sympathy and help which Co-operators extended towards the women and children is worthy of notice. The Co-operative Wholesale Society set aside £5,000 to be expended in relief of the distress which prevailed. The Somerset coalfields were affected, and Bedminster Co-operators saw the grim spectre of hunger and cold, some in their own homes, but all of them in too neighbourly a fashion to be ignored. When, therefore, they applied for a portion of the grant from the C.W.S. to be earmarked for their district, and received an official reply " that if theirs was a colliery district and directly affected the application would be considered," the Committee felt that a very serious matter was being trifled with, and accordingly sent a very strongly-worded protest to the C.W.S. Directors, which had the desired

effect; for £25 was received the following week, which amount was allotted to families for expenditure upon necessities obtainable at the Store. In addition, through the local Relief Committee, the Society itself distributed some 140 quarterns of bread.

The premises at Henry Street, Totterdown, were now proving too small for the growing trade of the district, and overtures were made to the owner of this property with a view to purchase. He was not inclined to be reasonable, probably thinking the trade was tied to the shop, and hoping to come in for a little unearned increment. The Committee, however, were independent, and, after some fruitless deputations to the gentleman in question, it was decided to give up possession and look for property elsewhere. This was found at Nos. 1 and 2, Highgrove Place, facing Wells Road, and plans were immediately prepared by Mr. J. Reed for suitable premises to be erected.

A special meeting of members was held at Essex Street Schoolroom on Friday, December 22nd, 1893, to consider the Committee's proposals. The patience of the members was to be rewarded at last. It was decided at this meeting to give the Committee power to deal with the erection of the building themselves; but—significant proviso—it was clearly laid down that there must be a clause in tenders that trades union rates of wages would be paid, and that there would be no sub-letting. A day or two afterwards the following advertisement made its appearance in the local press:—

> BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.—TENDERS for New SHOPS at TOTTERDOWN. Plans and specifications can be seen on and after to-day (Wednesday) at Central Stores, East Street, Bedminster, during office hours. Tenders must be in (endorsed "Tender for Totterdown Branch") on or before January 1st, 1894. N.B.—The lowest or any Tender not necessarily accepted.

So that the new year dawned with some prospect of progressive hopes being realised.



WELLS ROAD BRANCH, TOTTERDOWN.

CHAPTER VI.

IT is a healthy doctrine which forbids directors of public bodies to retain their seats if personally interested in work which may be done for that particular public body. And some members felt that the rule which governed this matter was not sufficiently drastic—in fact, that the last clause practically nullified the intended disqualification. The rule ran as follows:—

> Any member of the Committee of Management shall vacate his office if he holds any other place of profit under the Society, if he becomes bankrupt, if he be concerned in or participates in the profits of any contract with the Society. But the above rule shall be subject to the following exception: That no Committee-man shall vacate his office by reason of his being a member of any company or society which has entered into contracts with, or done any work for, the Society for which he is a Committee-man. Nevertheless he shall not vote in respect of such contract or work, and if he does so vote his vote shall not be counted.

It is evident there was some reason for the contention that the prohibition was only tentative. The question was raised at the Quarterly Meeting in December, 1893, on the motion of Mr. Hussey, but the matter was deferred. In view of the building operations about to be entered upon, the decision was of some importance, especially as the Committee had received powers to do the work themselves.

Early in the new year, 1894, contracts for erecting suitable premises at Highgrove Place, Totterdown, were let to Messrs. Broad and Shapland for £500. Mr. J. Reed was appointed the clerk of the works, and retired from the Committee shortly afterwards.

A mortgage of £800 was immediately taken up on the proposed scheme, and in less than three months, or, to be precise, on March 15th, the new Stores were opened by Mr. J. F. Hopkins, who was presented with a silver key by

the contractor (Mr. Broad). The meeting was attended by a large and representative gathering of Co-operators from all parts of the district, and included Mr. George Hawkins, then Chairman of the London Branch of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. A tea followed the opening ceremony, of which about 200 persons partook, and a grand concert in the evening wound up the proceedings for the day.

The anniversary meeting in the April of this year was noteworthy chiefly for a characteristic address by Canon S. A. Barnett, brother of Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett. The meeting was held in the Town Hall, Bedminster, and was largely attended. Canon Barnett, always a favourite with Bristol audiences, had a hearty reception, and his wise counsel found some response in the hearts of his listeners, for later in the same year another attempt was made to promote Co-operative ideals among the members through the medium of higher education. The reverend gentleman's remarks were too valuable to be lost, and the points of his address are summarised herewith. He said "that the opportunity of speaking that evening was very welcome to him, in the first place, because the invitation came through his old friend Mr. Hopkins, and in the second place, because it gave him an opportunity of coming into touch with the Bristol section of the great Co-operative movement. Now, it seemed to him that Co-operation and trades unionism were the two forces which would make the twentieth century. The twentieth century would be the working man's century. Trade unionism and Co-operation were the means by which working men could lay hold of the twentieth century and take their place in it. He was, therefore, especially glad to come into contact with the Bristol section of the Co-operators. The Chairman had told them about the triumphs of the past. But he would not spend any further time in talking about past triumphs, for he thought it would be better to direct their thoughts for a time to the future. It was always better, he thought, to look to the future than to the past. What would Co-operators be in the twentieth century? Well, he thought

they would be the merchant princes of that time—gathering up all that was great in the merchant princes of the past and dropping all that was mean and bad. The merchant princes of the Middle Ages were great men. They sent travellers into strange lands, who brought back to their country the treasures of distant parts, and their work enlarged the minds and the lives of the people amongst whom they lived. They made their money grandly, and they spent it grandly. They built palaces and warehouses, and encouraged painters and poets. But they had their seamy side. They were tyrannical in their customs, and cared little about their workpeople. Then there were the merchant princes of more modern days—men of integrity, of strong character, and honest. They made their money carefully by attending to their business and by caring for trifles. They did not build palaces, but they erected schools and endowed almshouses. But they also had their dark side. The Co-operators, as the merchant princes of the twentieth century, must have the grandeur of the old merchant princes and the honesty and strictness of the princes of the nineteenth century. They must not be content to be good traders only. They must endeavour to educate by their trade. They must, in the twentieth century, be ready to employ the best artists, and do all they could to raise the people of the country. They must, like the old merchant princes, be continually bringing within the reach of their customers the best of everything. They must feed the minds as well as the bodies of their customers. They must be spirited men, having a voice in the government of their city—leaving their mark on the city by public halls or houses for the workpeople. There might be many steps before Co-operators could enter upon this work. If there were many steps, one of them could be done in this generation. They might try with their own Store to make it renowned for its good dealings. They might see that everything in the business was as good as it could be—that there were no trade lies in the Store. Then, again, Co-operators might make their voices heard in the government of the city. There were

plenty of important questions in Bristol that Co-operators might have a voice in. Did they really think the only education necessary was reading and writing? Was there not a great deal to do, not only in teaching boys and girls how to earn money, but also how to spend it, how to enjoy books, how to enjoy the country, and how to enjoy picture galleries? Could not Co-operators push and push and push towards this higher education? Might they not do something to beautify their city, to make the streets grand? Could they not do something that coming generations might enjoy while walking about? Let them keep their eyes on the future. Let them make the Store a model of good business and a centre of public spirit."

It is interesting to note that shortly after this successful anniversary meeting the hours of employés were reduced one hour per week all round, and a little later that £2 was granted to the Bedminster Branch of the Women's Guild.

There is mention made in the minutes of the period to the apprenticeship of a lad for five years to the Store, the wages being set forth to advance from 6s. to 12s. during the first four years and to 15s. in the fifth. So that a lad starting to work at fourteen years of age would, at the age of nineteen, be receiving 15s. per week, the comparatively low rate being compensated for, one has to presume, for there is no evidence to show that such was ever granted, by the special training in Co-operative business methods afforded. The mediæval idea of fitting a craftsman for his craft by making him serve a master for a number of years was eminently suited to the age in which it was practised, but it by no means follows that similar methods will be suitable for modern industry—in fact, one has frankly to admit that they will not. What is needed most is the mediæval spirit applied to modern methods, and it appears that our Bedminster Co-operators missed an opportunity in this matter of apprenticeship towards making for an elevated standard of labour amongst the young people for whose future lives they were in large measure responsible.

In May it was suggested in some quarters that it should be within the province of members to appoint stocktakers. This by no means unreasonable suggestion was, however, set aside. Yet the members were but anticipating in primitive fashion what is fast becoming axiomatic in Co-operative practice, that in every Society there should be periodically an independent stocktaking and audit. The members, it is true, on this occasion intended these duties to be apportioned among themselves rather than handed over to experts, obviously the proper course; but without doubt their instinct was true; many a promising Society would have saved itself from loss and weakness had this instinct crystallised somewhat earlier in the movement.

A paper read at a Bradford-on-Avon Conference calls for some mention. The Society was invited to send representatives to discuss the question of interesting the children and young people in the movement. Unfortunately the notice was too short to permit of delegates being sent, but copies of the paper were applied for and eagerly scanned by some of the enthusiasts. At a later date the specific Co-operative education of the young was entered upon. It is more than probable that this paper read at Bradford did something to rouse the minds of Bedminster folk to this necessity.

The excellent address of Canon Barnett at the anniversary meeting was not permitted to go unheeded. In the autumn of the same year another attempt was made to rouse enthusiasm for "the larger vision." Excursions to places and buildings of historic and educational importance were arranged, including visits to the Council House, Merchant Venturers' Technical College, and Clifton College. Programmes were printed and distributed among the members, but these facilities only seem to have been accepted by a few, for in December it was commented upon that the attendances were sparse. About this time Canon Barnett published a book, "The Ideal City," of which the Committee purchased twelve copies, thus indicating that they, at any rate, realised the close connection between Co-operation and citizenship.

The Forty-ninth Quarterly Meeting in October, 1894, was the beginning of a series lasting four years, at each of which the Committee were able to record increased commercial prosperity and unabated confidence in the Society. At the end of that period a crisis occurred, the nature and results of which will be duly set forth at some length later. Meanwhile, it is possible to see in these increasing membership and trade returns, following within a year after the Congress of 1893, one beneficial result of that gathering in Bristol, and incidentally there is provided an excellent object-lesson to the newspaper critic.

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." The Bedminster Co-operators, it is true, had not as yet been through the keen frost of extreme adversity, but their neighbours in Bristol had felt the cold blast, and Bedminster had been moved to sympathy and help. Now another Society, this time Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, had fallen on evil days, and the Co-operative Union issued an appeal for £100. Out of a full and generous heart the members decided at this Forty-ninth Quarterly Meeting to subscribe their quota, £2. 2s., and if the amount were not sufficient the Committee were authorised to increase the contribution to £5. Unfortunately the effort to revive Coleford was fruitless, and the Society had to liquidate.

Having regard to the high tone usually adopted in the consideration of the Society's affairs, one is somewhat puzzled to find, in December, 1894, a minute to the effect that tradesmen be written to for Christmas boxes. One would have thought that from Co-operative Committeemen, at least, this pernicious system would have had no vestige of sanction. It indicates to what a large extent we are creatures of custom that any such idea should have entered the minds of any one of them.

In the early part of 1895, the distress in South Bristol through labour difficulties again becoming very acute, the Society promptly granted fifty loaves a week to the Relief Committee, a practical way of showing their sympathy.

Notwithstanding these local troubles the Society's trade increased at the rate of £50 per week over the previous quarter, and no less than £100 per week over the corresponding period of the previous year, and more share capital continued to flow into the Soceity. In response to an urgent request on the part of the Women's Guild the Society had embarked upon the experiment of supplying meat. We shall presently see that this departure, although obviously a desirable one, became a source of endless trouble and annoyance, and, in the end, nearly proved to be the undoing of the Society.

Meanwhile trade in the Victoria Park district, which was being served by Totterdown Branch, had so much increased that the existing arrangements were inadequate to cope with it. After vainly trying to negotiate with Sir Greville Smythe for the purchase of a piece of land at the junction of St. John's Lane and Redcatch Road whereon to build suitable premises, a shop and dwelling-house in John's Lane being offered for sale, the members decided that the Committee should be empowered to secure these at a cost of £440. The necessary fitting up was put in hand at once, and pushed forward with all speed, so that on June 26th, 1895, amid enthusiastic rejoicing, Dr. Percival (the Right Rev. Bishop of Hereford) attended and formally opened the shop. He afterwards gave a short address outside. The company then adjourned to a marquee erected in a field opposite the new Branch, where tea was served. Mr. J. F. Hopkins presided; and at the conclusion of the repast presented the right reverend gentleman with a handsomely-bound copy of the Co-operative Wholesale Societies' "Annual."

Dr. Percival acknowledged the gift of the book, and said he should always cherish it as an expression of the goodwill and friendship of a great many of the good citizens of Bristol. He went on to say that he had a profound belief in the benefits which the great Co-operative movement had conferred upon them as a nation, not merely in the way of material comforts, but in their home life, their citizen life, their moral life, and, he hoped, their religious life. One hardly realised where one stood when

one thought of the prosperous Co-operative work that was going on. He looked back to the time, which he could well remember, when the movement was in its infancy. There was a time when Co-operation was looked upon with some suspicion in Bristol, and many were afraid of it, and timid about giving it their support. It took a considerable time to get over that feeling of hesitation; and it was a great pleasure to him to see how the movement was growing in Bristol, with what deep roots it had established itself among them, and what great hope there was that it would grow up a beneficent tree, spreading the fruits of happiness and prosperity through many generations. He believed that as time went on it would do more to drive out a great evil of their common life, the principle of competition, because competition at the bottom of it was really a warfare, whereas Co-operation was the principle of common friendly action for the good of all. Competition would always tend to the undue advantage of the rich and the depression of the poor. On the other hand, Co-operation tended to increase the comfort, the happiness, and the good citizenship of the great mass of the people of this country. In conclusion, he expressed a hope that the time was not far distant when they would be in the position to devote a much larger proportion of their funds to the higher moral purpose which came under the head of education.

A vote of thanks to the Bishop was moved by Mr. Gilmore Barnett, who referred to the satisfactory condition of the Society, and seconded by Mr. W. B. Griffin (Educational Secretary).

Mr. G. Hawkins (Chairman of the London Branch of the Co-operative Wholesale Society), in supporting the motion, said he was pleased to see that their local Secretary was able to teach a lesson in commercial morality, in so far that the hours worked by their employés per week were eight to ten hours less than those in shops of a like description in the city.

The vote of thanks was heartily carried, for which the Bishop returned thanks.

A public meeting was subsequently held, and was addressed by, amongst others, Mr. J. F. Hopkins, Mr. Gilmore Barnett, Mr. Sidey (of the Western Sectional Board), Mr. G. Hawkins, and Mrs. Martin.

The Bishop has never been slow to ally himself with causes which he believes make for social righteousness; and his strenuous advocacy of movements such as the Co-operative movement has more than once brought him into conflict with those whose interest it is to place private gain before public good. On this occasion he was the target for one of the trade journals, *The Grocer*. The following is quoted from its article of August 10th, 1895:—

COMPETITION AND CO-OPERATION.

It is not expected that Bishops should know much about shopkeeping, but they might, at least, have sense enough not to make public speeches on subjects they do not understand. Unhappily, however, we now find the Church uniting itself with Co-operation, and the recent speech of the Bishop of Hereford at the opening of a new Branch of the Bedminster Industrial Co-operative Society is one of the most remarkable for absolute fatuity that we have read for a long time. The Bishop professed "a profound belief in the benefits which the great Co-operative movement had conferred, not merely in the way of material comforts, but in their home life, their citizen life, their moral life, and, he hoped, their religious life." Now, for instance, what material comforts has Co-operation conferred? All necessaries of life, all the luxuries of life also, were to be had before Co-operation started on its "material, home, citizen, and moral" mission. Money has always been able to buy such comforts as its owners could afford; if Co-operation has not introduced any new comforts—and we are convinced it has not—there is little sense or cogency in these remarks. It is ridiculous to talk of Co-operation increasing material and other comforts. And why? Pure and simple Co-operation originally meant the clubbing together of a few persons to buy a chest of tea, or other goods, in original packages, and dividing such between themselves, thus saving the middleman's profit.

From one point of view this may have been satisfactory; but is it from all points of view? A few persons, not tea dealers, unite thus in the purchase of a chest of tea to save distributing costs. But suppose a few others, for instance, not shoemakers, did the same for shoes, and so on through all branches of trade and commerce. What would be the inevitable result? Among those non-dealers in tea were perhaps a boot and shoe dealer, a chemist,

&c. If all trades were to be interfered with thus, where would the profit come from that would enable tea, &c., to be bought? A draper might glow with satisfaction at the thought of having bought tea at 4d. under the usual prices; but his countenance would change painfully if he heard of his customers combining to purchase dozens of shirts and collars, and thus do away with his profit. Yet this was essentially the beginning and aim of Co-operation. The various classes of the community are never so well off materially, civilly, or morally as when all of them are getting fair remunerative prices for their wares. The more there is to spend all round, the better off everyone is. It may be nice to save at someone else's expense, but it is far better and more Christian-like not only to live, but to let live. There is no reason why Bishops should draw their £3,000 or even £8,000 a year when a little simple co-operation could manage things just as well, and perhaps better. Co-operation need not be confined to the grocery trade; it may be happily applied to other occupations of a more exalted character in which the chief functionaries are extremely well paid for doing little or nothing, and have not shrewdness enough to know when to be silent. For a Bishop to gloat over the failure—for what else does the success of Co-operation mean?—of a respectable body of citizens, who, by living themselves, let others live also, is a sorry spectacle. Are Bishops paid at the rate of thousands a year to make such misleading partisan orations?

BRANCH STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Raymend Road Branch—	£	£	£
1900	2799	320	114
1901	3007	287	153
1902	2661	264	161
1903	2698	321	217
1904	2084	259	117

RAYMEND ROAD BRANCH.

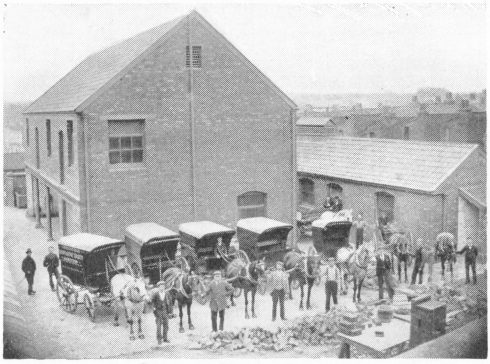




RALEIGH ROAD BRANCH.

CHAPTER VII.

THROUGHOUT the whole of 1895 the Society was engaged in building operations and purchasing new property. Commercial success invariably brings in its train evils which have to be recognised and summarily dealt with. The growing prosperity of the Store stimulated the cupidity of some and the jealousy of others. Thus, but for the desire of one individual to press for an extreme limit, a block of property situate in Little Paradise might have been bought for £1,000. The seller stipulated for £1,020, and, after negotiations had been broken off, expressed himself willing to take £1,000, but his offer was then declined. In another case, the Society, requiring premises adjoining the East Street shop for extensions, these being let at the time, the tenant expressed himself willing to relinquish his tenancy for the sum of £230. The Committee refused to permit the Society to be drained in this fashion, and let the matter drop for the time being.



STABLES, NORTH STREET.

The immediate necessity was more stable accommodation, and the somewhat unusual course was adopted of advertising for land upon which to build. Amongst other

sites considered was a plot near to Mutton Hill and Mathias Pond; but ultimately a property in North Street, and a private house in Ewart Road adjoining, were secured. The premises fronting North Street had been used by the vendor for a greengrocery business, and this portion he rented for some time after the Society made the purchase. This property seems to have been something of a "white elephant" to the Society. The accommodation was too small; and, notwithstanding that a considerable sum was spent for alterations and repairs, it was found impossible to accommodate the whole of the Society's vehicles there.

Of course, this should have been seen before the purchase was made, but it was of no use indulging in vain regrets. The Committee had to do the next best thing, and attempts were made to sell the property again. A purchaser was found for the Ewart Street house, but it did not suit the Society's purpose to split the lot, and they held on, meanwhile looking out for more land or suitable premises to be offered. After twelve months or so a further piece of land, near King William Street, was offered and secured. Plans and specifications were prepared by Mr. R. Slaughter for building a block of stables, providing stalls and two loose boxes for seventeen horses, harness-room, sheds for twenty-four vans, lofts containing 1,800 square feet floor space, engine-house, boiler-house, outhouses, and other necessary offices. Space was left to be utilised for the erection of a carpenter's shop and stands for building material; for the Society decided that in future it would do its own building. There was no official opening of these stables, for as each portion was completed the Society entered into occupancy; and when, early in 1898, the whole block was taken up, the old North Street premises were let, on a favourable rental, to a greengrocer.

The total cost of this undertaking, including the land, was £1,700, and the work was carried out under the superintendence of the architect and the Society's Building Committee. The fair wages and no sub-contracting clauses were inserted in the contract; but there was grave

suspicion that these stipulations were being evaded by the contractor, and correspondence ensued, though nothing of a definite character came to light. It is significant, however, that in the following year this same contractor's tender, although lower than others, was rejected in favour of another upon whom it was felt more reliance could be placed in this respect.

While this work was proceeding, the no less necessary erections were taking place at Church Road, with the result that on June 25th, 1896, the buildings were completed, and another red-letter day was set down in the annals of the Society. These premises were also designed by Mr. R. Slaughter, and the contract carried out in a highly satisfactory manner by Mr. Charles Harvey.

By the opening of these premises the Society came into possession of a magnificent block of buildings, well-appointed shops, including good, lofty, well-ventilated, and well-lighted workrooms for tailoring and bootmaking. The addition of these departments, of course, meant that the commission trade had to cease, and the familiar sign very shortly appeared, "Our Clothing Club has commenced." It also meant that the premises vacated by the Boot and Shoe Department could be utilised by the Confectionery.

Early in 1897 it was found desirable to purchase a further three plots of land adjoining the Society's property in Church Road. The area of the whole was 64 by 48 feet. This purchase was made with a view to future developments, but it was also felt that this step was necessary to prevent the drainage of the building adjoining being too near the Boot Department.

The Bishop of Hereford had promised to perform the opening ceremony, but was prevented by the sad loss of his wife from being present, Canon S. A. Barnett stepping into the breach. The occasion was utilised to provide a unique object-lesson to members, in the shape of an Exhibition of Co-operative Productions at the Town Hall. Foremost, of course, were the goods of the C.W.S., but there were creditable shows from other Productive

Societies, including the two Bristol Productives, the Pioneer Boot and Shoe and the Bristol Pianoforte Manufacturers. Canon Barnett formally declared the exhibition open, and after highly eulogising Dr. Percival, and expressing his sympathy with the Rt. Rev. Bishop in the loss he had sustained, the Canon expressed his satisfaction at the work which was being done by the Co-operative movement. After the exhibition came the shops. In declaring these open for business the Canon dwelt at some length on the "necessity for giving care and attention to higher aspirations of Co-operation than mere money getting." Many other speeches were made, some of the congratulations coming from as distant a place as Plymouth. At the conclusion of the proceedings Canon Barnett was presented with a specially-bound copy of the Co-operative Wholesale Societies' "Annual."

The Exhibition of Co-operative Productions did much to open the eyes of members and the general public to the vastness of the Co-operative movement; moreover, it stimulated many members to show more loyalty to the principles of Co-operation by demanding goods of Co-operative manufacture from the Store. This influence has grown; the Co-operative outlook at Bedminster has broadened from that day; a silent revolution has been taking place in members' purchases ever since.

There are to be found in most Societies individuals who have suspicions that all is not well with the brethren. The slightest breath of a suggestion, no matter whence it comes, if it is defamatory to the Store, is accepted greedily by them as confirming their own moody forebodings. Sometimes they are led to give public expression to their doubts, but usually a little patience and tact prevents any mischief being done. It does happen occasionally that a more obstinate member of the fraternity insists upon airing his generalisations in spite of all assurances. At the Quarterly Meeting in May, 1895, two accusations were brought against the *bona-fides* of the officials—one to the effect that a certain member who had large investments in the Society was being treated preferentially. Upon the Committee pressing for particulars, nothing of

a satisfactory nature was produced, and an apology was tendered and accepted. But another statement to the effect that members could buy cheaper at one Branch than another was not so easily dealt with. For some months correspondence passed between the Committee and the member who brought the complaint, but to no purpose. The Quarterly Meeting in August strongly resented this, and all but carried the question to extremes. It was eventually placed on record "that this meeting strongly condemns the action of Mr. ———, but that all reference to a lawyer's letter be omitted."

One would think that, in a Co-operative community, at any rate, anonymous communications would not find a place. But it does happen at times that some weakling thus likes to find relief. It puzzles one to find any trace of practical utility in such a letter as the following:—

TO THE COMMITTEE:

GENTLEMEN,—How is it that goods can't be had as cheap at the Stores as at other shops? We can get tea 4d. per lb. cheaper at other shops, butter 1d., soap ½d. per bar, cocoa, ½d. per packet, and many other things, but what I want to know is: What is the use of paying a large dividend and charging extra on goods? An answer will oblige at the next meeting.

A MEMBER.

The question of purchasing goods for the Store is often a matter for controversy. Co-operators are very keen upon buying right, but they are also keen upon watching the men who buy. Our friends at Bedminster, for the better administration of this department, evolved a few rules, which are certainly of interest. Up till this period, and for some time afterwards, the Society's official buyer had been one of the Committee; and these rules, which were drawn up in November, 1895, were part of a general set of instructions to the Purchasing Committee. This Committee consisted of four members of the General Committee, together with the three officers, and a special grant of £3 was made by the members to be divided between them, according to attendances. The buyer had to be elected at the first General Committee meeting after the Annual Meeting,

and to hold office for twelve months. It was specifically laid down:—

1. That, in conjunction with the buyer and Manager, two members of the Purchasing Committee shall be communicated with on any special occasion of large buying, as far as circumstances will permit.

2. That the buyer shall consider any recommendations or suggestions made to him by the General or Purchasing Committee. That he shall not be held by any hard and fast rules, but shall report to the Purchasing Committee on all purchases made by him and the Manager to the best of their abilities, and that we give them our fullest confidence.

3. That persons purchasing on behalf of the Society any goods on which discount or commission are allowed shall not retain same, but shall cause it to be made over to the Society.

For the dissemination of Co-operative information the movement owes much to its literature. The *Co-operative News* has done a great work in this respect, and its pages have been appreciated by Bristol readers. But in 1896 the C.W.S. made Societies the offer of providing a monthly record of which the first and last pages might be utilised for local purposes. This was taken up at Bedminster, and the "Wheatsheaf" has ever since been a valuable propagandist agency for the Society.





CHURCH ROAD BRANCH, BEDMINSTER.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT now becomes necessary to refer to a matter which, at the time, was the source of some anxiety to the Committee and officials, but which proved to be a blessing in disguise, contributing to the greater material prosperity of the Society.

Throughout the whole of 1896, and for some time during 1897, every possible opportunity was taken by those jealous of the progress of the Store to discredit its operations. The neighbourhoods of both Bedminster and Totterdown were flooded with anti-Co-operative literature; enterprising grocers posed before the community as universal benefactors; comparisons were drawn between the goods they sold and presumably similar goods sold by the Society, of course much in favour of their own. The balance sheet of the Society was subjected to a rigorous analysis, and suggestive advantages offered by these disinterested (?) folk if only Store members would be reasonably wise and deal at their shops.

The specious pleas put forth were ably met by manifestoes issued by the Committee. Furthermore, in order to be fully assured in their own minds as to the real truth of their statements, samples of goods offered by the traders concerned were procured and placed side by side with those of a similar character sold at the Stores, with no indication that might lead to their identification. The Auditors, as custodians of the members' financial interests, and as having no particular interest to serve, were called in to adjudicate. Their verdict was decidedly in favour of the Society, nine out of ten articles being superior in quality to those offered by the traders. One

of the tricks of the trade is to draw up paper comparisons of such goods as sugar, cereals, and provisions, wherein differences in quality will often account for differences in price, trusting to the carelessness of the general public, who seldom realise that the comparison is only partially drawn. Those wily persons thought to score heavily at the expense of Co-operation. But they reckoned without their host. Such attempts have been made before in the history of the movement, and the result has always been to increase trade and membership at the Store. As it was pointed out in the Society's "Record" for September, 1896,

> But for the spiteful and malicious character of these fabrications many who are now members would have still remained ignorant of the value and extent of Co-operation. The very bitter and rancorous spirit in which the successive handbills were conceived and carried forth excited the curiosity first, then obtained for us the support of many who would have taken no time nor trouble to inquire into the movement but for the method of attack.

It was felt that these folk were not worth "powder and shot," or they might have figured in the courts as defendants upon a charge of libel. But it would have been like using a sledge-hammer upon a tack to have taken such serious notice of the statements made, and the Committee accepted the advice of the Co-operative Union to refrain from any action.

From time to time the position of the Society at Keynsham had forced itself upon the attention of Bedminster Co-operators. Being such near neighbours—moreover, being largely responsible for bringing the Society into existence—it was but natural that the leaders in Bedminster should view the struggle of their village friends with sympathetic concern. The full story of the negotiations which passed between the two Societies from 1896 to 1898 is told in the chapter dealing with Keynsham affairs, but it is without doubt one of the blots upon this successful period of Bedminster's career that it refused the call to amalgamate. One has to confess that the recommendations were somewhat clumsily put

forward by the Committee, but this is to their credit rather than otherwise. Sure in their own minds as to the Co-operative wisdom of the step, they made no provision for discreet methods of procedure; they credited their members with sharing the idealism which they themselves possessed, but the response was unequal to the call.

In the latter part of 1896 one sees that an influence had been making itself felt in respect to those higher considerations which had been emphasised on more than one occasion. It had been stated that the wages paid by a miller from whom a large portion of the Society's flour was drawn were inadequate. The miller was accordingly written to, and he replied that he "paid better wages than Mr. ——," naming a large competitor of his. The ultimate result of this zealous care for proper conditions of labour on the part of the Committee does not appear to have been worthy of note, for no further reference to the matter appears in the minutes; but, remembering their attitude in time past, it was something to the good that even this slight interest should have been aroused. A month or so later, having cause to suspect that a firm of brush-makers with whom the Society dealt were under-paying their men, inquiries were set on foot, and, no satisfactory reply being received, the account was closed forthwith. Incidents such as these show that in the Society's affairs a new sense of responsibility was making itself manifest, resulting in practical consideration being given to the welfare of the labour employed in the manufacture of the goods which they were distributing.

The educationists, too, woke up to some real educational work. They thought of the children, and started juvenile classes in "Co-operation." The progress of this development is noted elsewhere. These were indications that the leaven of Co-operative idealism was working to good purpose.

It was a time of general trade prosperity, and the Store was booming in all departments. The business was now of a very comprehensive character, most of the

household requirements being catered for, to say nothing of houses. The general hardware and crockery stocked, under the high-sounding title of "showroom goods," were an especial pride. The new departments for tailoring and outfitting were doing well, and, for a wonder, the Butchery Department seemed to be satisfactory. In the Bread Department it was proudly recorded that 5,600 4lb. loaves had been sent out in one week, and a good confectionery trade was being established.

The youngest Branch, Raymend Road, John's Lane, celebrated its first anniversary in July, 1897, with a great flourish of trumpets and some children's sports.

Profits were good for a time, and from October, 1896, to April, 1897, the rate of dividend was advanced from 2s. to 2s. 1d. This appears to have been somewhat extravagant; a wiser policy would have been to utilise some of the extra gain in the prosperous times to depreciate the buildings more heavily. As it was, the amount set apart, £10 per quarter, was the same when land and buildings were valued at £8,521 as when at £5,379. The results of the quarter ending July, 1897, showed a considerable falling off in profit, and this should have been a warning to the Committee to put their house in order. But the opportunity had been neglected; obligations in respect to dividend had to be met as nearly as possible upon the maximum basis, consequently the depreciation had to suffer, and did so. From this time till January, 1899. was a kind of "rake's progress," outwardly a triumphant upward development, at the heart of things a surrender to a spirit of reckless expansion, culminating in almost irretrievable disaster, the situation only being saved by the most severely drastic measures being taken to regain the confidence of the members. These matters will be dealt with in the next and following chapters. In the meantime, one or two landmarks call for special notice.

First there was the resignation of Mr. Hopkins from the presidential chair. This took effect from March, 1898.

In a letter which he addressed to Mr. Bullock on March 12th, 1898, he expressed his "regret at being unable to meet his colleagues," and in optimistic vein referred to the fact "that the Society had now passed the initial stages and that helped him to his decision. He was willing to serve on the Committee if the members thought fit to elect him."

For some time Mr. Hopkins had been in failing health. The shadow of a great loss was upon him: early in 1897 he had lost his wife after a few days of intense suffering, and the sunshine had gone from his life. He was one of those who had done yeoman service to Co-operation in Bristol, and throughout the whole of the West of England. A ready speaker, and wielding a facile pen, he was an influence on the side of righteous principles. A genial and warm-hearted comrade, with ruddy face and a shock of curly hair, he was a familiar figure wherever Co-operators were wont to gather. He was one of the few men who were known to have been members of the old Bristol Societies. He joined the Bristol Industrial Society in 1863, and remained a member until it was wound up in 1874. He was one of the pioneers of Bedminster Society, and his ripe experience and caution had been invaluable to the Society during the course of its development. He voluntarily yielded up the high honour which had been his for four years, breathing the true spirit of Co-operative brotherhood, hoping that wisdom and concord would be the ruling characteristics of members and Committee alike.

As an appreciation of his great services the members on June 11th, 1898, presented him with a gold watch and albert, while several individually testified to the esteem and regard in which he had been held. To fill his place, the members elected Mr. H. J. Pope, a man of strong Co-operative faith, and well esteemed by all who knew him.

Another important incident of the period was the opening of the third Branch. Ashton Gate has on more

than one occasion been the subject of remarks in these pages, and now the members in that district were to have their hopes realised; a Branch Store was to be established in their midst. The question had been delayed for some time owing to the difficulty experienced in securing property, the traders using their influence to prevent the Society from settling in the neighbourhood. When, however, the great tobacco kings, Messrs. W. D. and H. O. Wills, secured land in the district whereon to build a factory, it was felt that at all hazards a move must be made, for the district quickly developed. The Society's efforts were eventually crowned with success; a favourable site was secured, at the angle formed by the Raleigh and Hamilton Roads. Plans and specifications were immediately drawn up by Mr. Slaughter, and the contract, both for building and fittings, was secured by Messrs. Beavan. The usual conditions were inserted in the contract: that full trade union wages of the district be paid, and that there should be no sub-letting. Operations were commenced immediately, and slowly a handsome structure rose upon the site, the whole being completed from foundation to ridge without a single accident, and no difficulty being experienced with the builder.

These premises are still an ornament to the neighbourhood, having a frontage of 80 feet to Hamilton Road and 32 feet to Raleigh Road. The brickwork is of best Shortwood red bricks, with facings of Corsham freestone. The ground floor space occupies 1,731 superficial feet, exclusive of a good storage yard and offices. A well-appointed showroom and stockrooms take up the first floor, and the whole is surmounted by a well-ventilated and splendidly-lighted assembly-room, providing the Society with a hall suitable for either business or propaganda purposes.

The opening was timed for December, 1897; but, owing to a fire at Messrs. Beavan's premises, which destroyed the fittings which had been prepared, the ceremony had to be delayed a month or so. The occasion was thereupon utilised to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the

Society, and on February 19th, 1898, Mr. P. Sparke Evans, J.P., performed the function in the presence of a large company, which included representatives from the C.W.S. and neighbouring Societies.

Mr. Evans made a happy speech, congratulating the Society upon the acquisition of such a splendid block of buildings, and expressed himself "thoroughly in favour of the principles of the movement, especially in their relation to the co-partnership of labour. In going through the



INTERIOR OF BEDMINSTER BAKERY.

premises he noticed they had no clock in the hall, and, as this was always found to be an efficient check upon long speeches, he would have much pleasure in making the Branch a present of a clock."

Before leaving the premises Mr. Bullock (Secretary) presented Mr. Sparke Evans with a specially-bound copy of the C.W.S. "Annual."

This chapter must not close without mention of the opening of the bakery extension in Dean Street. This took place on Saturday afternoon, May 21st, 1898, before a company of Co-operators from all parts, the ceremony

being performed by Mr. A. Bullock. He mentioned the fact "that these bakeries had been fitted out, not only with a view to turning out good bread, but that provision had been made for the health and comfort of those who would have to work there. The whole of the work had been carried out by the Society without the intervention of the contractor, and the result was felt to be creditable to the movement."

BRANCH STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Raleigh Road Branch—	£	£	£
1900	4964	555	375
1901	5123	526	398
1902	5089	568	218
1903	4263	560	122
1904	3455	449	173



CHAPTER IX.

IT is now necessary to refer to that critical period which more than once has been foreshadowed in the previous pages.

Had all the members been vegetarians the crisis would never have occurred, a superficial if not very satisfactory point in favour of that special creed. It was the very English fondness for meat which was the starting-point of the trouble. No English home is complete without its joint at least once a week; generally, with the working classes, on a Sunday. Sometimes father brings home a snack for Saturdays, but the *piece de resistance* is reserved for Sundays, when the whole family gathers round the board together.

Bread and meat are the two necessities which bulk largest in the dietary of the working classes. It happened, therefore, in 1895, when No. 117 of the East Street premises became untenanted, the idea of supplying meat took practical shape. The members of the Women's Guild talked it over, and made the suggestion to the Committee. Brought before their notice in this official manner, the Committee felt bound to do something, and accordingly made inquiries from other Societies as to their experience in the trade. The replies they received were by no means encouraging. They were strongly counselled to be cautious, as this was a difficult and trying business to manage. Difficulties of such a kind never deter Co-operators when they are assured the time is ripe for action, so, notwithstanding some gloomy forebodings and grave headshakes, it was decided to go on. The shop was to be opened for the supply of butcher's meat.

The appointment of a Manager caused some little trouble at first, and the question of a reliable source of supply also bothered the Committee not a little. Acting on the advice of the Manager of Plymouth Society, some cattle were bought in Devonshire, but this appears to have been a temporary measure only.

These were but trifles compared with the endless complaints which poured in upon the Committee when the man had started, and supplies began to find their way to members. Questions as to prices and qualities had constantly to be investigated; week after week, month after month, this Butchery Department was a source of annoyance to the harassed officials, and, to crown all, the profit, if any was made, was never satisfactory. For the first quarter there was no profit at all, and, when asked for an explanation, the butcher, with charming frankness, attributed the loss to the necessity of destroying surplus stock which had gone "off," and to the fact that he had had to sell cheaper to some members than others.

One can imagine the horror and consternation in the Committee-room at such an avowal, for of all the canons of Co-operative trading none is more jealously guarded than that there shall be no preferential treatment. It was therefore found desirable to dispense with such doubtful services; but the difficulty which constantly presented itself was how to get men who could be relied upon. To aggravate the situation Totterdown members clamoured for a butchery shop, and would not be content till in 1896 one was set up in their district.

In order to place the department upon a paying basis, all manner of expedients were resorted to, but in vain. At the very best 10d. in the £ over and above expenses was the most favourable profit that could be made, and in consequence this department was always a drain on others which were paying better. So, after much deliberation, in June, 1898, the Committee recommended that a separate dividend should be allotted for meat. Not without some dissent from the members, this course was agreed to.

A final change of management occurred in January, 1898, both shops being placed in charge of one man. Meanwhile a close comparison was made of the operations which ensued. Before long considerable leakages began to make themselves apparent, so that in July, 1898, a Special Committee was appointed to investigate a loss of £19. 9s. As a result of their investigations it was felt that the Manager should be replaced. When, however, it came

to deciding upon a successor, the old difficulty cropped up: a dearth of reliable men, and it seemed as though worse might be done than to retain the man already in possession, especially as his record for a few weeks had been improving. In a desperate moment of weakness this course was decided upon.

It is astonishing that people who are ordinarily careful to the extreme in their estimation of small transactions will become absolutely reckless in their confidence when these transactions bulk sufficiently large. It is this weakness which makes the task of bubble company promoters an easy one; and it was just this weakness which the butcher, maybe in self-deceit as much as anything else, resolved to play upon. Having first of all enlisted the sympathy of the General Manager, he persuaded the Committee to permit him to buy wholesale, and sell to other butchers. How he managed to convince them that he alone, of all the butchers in Bristol, could manage the meat supply of the city, is a mystery yet to be solved. Here was a man who, a few weeks previously, it had been practically decided to dispense with, now permitted to operate on a magnificent scale, involving the Society in thousands of pounds, when formerly it was tens. It is impossible to explain such reckless confidence, except to say that it affords sufficient indication that the Committee never had a grasp of the preliminary essentials of this business.

It is but fair to add, however, that some of them were by no means satisfied; although, through the weakness of the management, they were already committed to this business, they never ceased strenuously to oppose the wholesale trading. One had the temerity to address a communication to the correspondence columns of the *Co-operative News*, asking whether any other Society did such a business, but no reply was vouchsafed to his query.

It stands on record, too, that these few Adullamites did test the strength of their position by moving a resolution in December, 1898, that the wholesale business should be dispensed with, but they were beaten.

Then, by some it was questioned whether the Society's position in respect to the non-payment of income tax upon profits was not being affected by their supplying non-members to such a large extent upon a profitable basis. The Co-operative Union was accordingly written to, and the question put; but a ruling upon the exact point was not given. Evidently the position was so novel that it was difficult to make it clearly understood in correspondence. Still these are quite sufficient evidences that there were a few cautious individuals not entirely captured by the glamour of big figures.

As a solace to their feelings more than from a sense of need, it was arranged that the General Manager should always be present when beasts were bought, and, further, that all retail debts of over two weeks old were to be reported to the Committee weekly, and that no new wholesale accounts were to be opened without his (the General Manager's) sanction. From what subsequently transpired, these instructions do not appear to have been faithfully carried out, and it would seem that no attempt was made to enforce them.

This wholesale trading was carried on for a little more than six months. For the first quarter, ending October, 1898, it was reported that profits had benefited slightly as the result of the increased turnover. This was the signal for wilder and wilder schemes of corporate aggrandisement. Sales increased enormously during the next three months. In some weeks the trade returns in butchering exceeded £1,000, nine-tenths of which was to other butchers, most of whom were in a large way themselves. The Butchery Manager quieted all fears by stating that these transactions resulted in a clear profit of 5 per cent to the Society. Schemes for further development began to arise. Slaughteries were planned, and actually projected; and orders were given to fit up the yard at Church Road for hanging meat. This was in December, 1898.

The New Year had scarcely dawned when the crash came, and the castles in the air which over-sanguine enthusiasts had permitted themselves to erect collapsed like a pricked bubble. It was reported at the Committee

meeting on January 7th, 1899, that a large debtor disputed a claim of over £300. In consequence of this, other outstanding accounts were investigated, only to find that these were disputed also. By January 14th it was found that no less a sum than £1,651. 13s. 2d. could not be accounted for. Subsequently it was shown that, although the accounts were inaccurate, no proof could be afforded that there had been deliberate falsification.

A drastic reorganisation of the internal affairs of the Society was put in hand immediately. First of all, the Meat Department was reconstituted, with checks and counter checks, and no wholesale trading. The chief clerk was appointed Cashier, and made responsible for collecting and banking cash, and the question of a permanent Secretary was discussed. Without hesitation it was decided to have the books of the Society thoroughly overhauled by chartered accountants; and, acting upon the advice of the Co-operative Union, Messrs. Appleby and Wood (Manchester) were appointed to undertake the task.

However one may feel inclined to blame the Committee for the disaster, one cannot but admire the thoroughness with which they tackled the situation when they realised the true position.

Without delay the Auditors set about their work, and, in due course, presented a balance sheet at a Special Meeting of members on February 15th, 1899. Briefly stated, the position was as follows:—

Trade—	£	Net Profit—	£
All departments	20271	Other departments .	1372
Meat Dept. alone	7775	Loss in Meat Dept. .	1565
Leaving for other depts.	12496	Net Loss.....	193

The Auditors further reported that the "Society's system of bookkeeping was antiquated, their methods being very cumbersome, and that there was an utter lack of system in respect to purchase accounts. The butchery checks were so easily manipulated as to be absolutely worthless." Their recommendations included "the application of a complete change in the system of bookkeeping, and the audit of accounts by a public

auditor at least once a year. Further, that stocks should always be taken at cost value for balance sheet purposes."

While, of course, it was gratifying that the experts' analysis of the financial position agreed with that already set out by the Society's officials, it must have been wormwood and gall to many of the Committee to have these strictures passed upon their methods. Bedminster had long been held up as a pattern to other Societies in the West, and this was indeed a rude awakening.

At the Special Meeting of members held on February 15th, 1899, the Committee frankly confessed they had blundered by allowing themselves to be dragged into this risky business without providing adequate machinery to cope with the necessary details. Mr. Appleby presented his report on behalf of the special Auditors, and recommended that the loss be liquidated from the reserve, and that the balance of this fund should be utilised to pay 1s. dividend, thus facing the difficulty, and settling it at once. The meeting was a large, and, as might be expected, a stormy one. At such a time clear thinking is at a discount, indignation and the desire to "have a go" at someone makes sound and sane advice appear to be tame and weak. Mr. Appleby's advice was rejected, and the Committee were recommended to carry forward the loss to a suspense account, to be liquidated quarter by quarter till wiped out. Even there the members did not stop. At the adjourned meeting, a fortnight later, the Committee were subjected to a rigorous cross-examination upon their report, the General Manager being handled rather severely by both questioners and questioned. Finally, amid considerable excitement and confusion, an Investigation Committee was appointed to inquire and report upon the following:—

1. Under what conditions wholesale trading shall be carried on in future.

2. To what extent credit shall be allowed in wholesale and retail trading.

3. Into the general management of the Society, together with a revision of salaries if any changes are recommended.

The members appointed to this Committee were Messrs. J. Curle, I. Hamblin, Wm. Bullock, Farmer, Hollier, Hollings, Knight, G. A. Martin, and Parfitt, who reported on May 17th as follows:—

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

FELLOW-MEMBERS,—The Special Committee appointed by resolution at a meeting on March 1st, 1889, to inquire—

I.—Under what conditions wholesale trading shall be carried on in future.

II.—To what extent credit shall be allowed in wholesale and retail trading.

III.—Into the general management of the Society, together with a revision of the salaries, if any changes are recommended.

It has held sixteen meetings, attended as follows:—

Mr. CURLE (Chairman)	3	Mr. HOLLINGS	12
,, HAMBLIN (Dep.-Ch.) .	16	,, KNIGHT	9
,, WM. BULLOCK	14	,, G. A. MARTIN	15
,, FARMER.....	14	,, PARFITT (Sec.).....	16
,, HOLLIER	10		

Messrs. Curle, Hollings, and Knight (being also members of the General Committee) attended parts of four, three, and three meetings respectively in addition to the above.

We beg to report as follows:—

QUESTION I.

Having carefully considered the circumstances leading up to the disaster in the Meat Department, we consider it undesirable that any wholesale trading shall be entered upon in future without first obtaining the consent of the members by resolution; and we further recommend that in any case it should be with Co-operative Societies only.

QUESTION II.

In wholesale trading we recommend that dealings shall be for cash, either "prompt" or at the end of a week.

In retail trading we find:—

That systematic credit obtains in the Society to too great an extent. An examination of the shop ledgers at all the Grocery Stores shows that customers taking a month's credit and over are numerous.

There has been, in our opinion, a dangerous growth of wholesale business at retail prices in the drapery commission trade. The Central Stores ledger shows accounts of customers dealing in this way to the extent (in one case) of something like £150 per quarter. The practice is to send non-members to obtain orders in the names of members for commission goods. We feel that this system is opposed to our principles. We have pointed out to the General

Committee, through their Secretary, the risks of the credit commission trade generally, and are pleased to find that steps have been taken to deal with it.

We recommend:—

1. The immediate discontinuance of commission or other trade, except to customers direct.
2. That commission goods be paid for strictly cash.
3. That at as early a date as possible Rule 107, which provides for absolute cash dealing, shall be enforced, and that in the meantime credit should not be given for more than one parcel of goods.

In cases of distress the General Committee would naturally allow a little credit.

Dealing for cash is one of the first principles of Co-operation. We cannot too strongly recommend it to our fellow-members as best for themselves, the Society, and the cause, and we appeal to them to help bring this about. Credit involves much useless labour and worry in bookkeeping.

QUESTION III.

We find that—

1. It is absolutely necessary for the proper management of the Society that the General Committee should be able to be in touch with the practical working of the business.
2. Many of the systems lately in vogue for dealing with goods received, cash takings, and the bookkeeping and audit have been very defective. The bookkeeping has, however, we need hardly remind the members, been remodelled by Messrs. Appleby and Wood, Chartered Accountants, and we are pleased to record that the General Committee has made, and is making (in our opinion), many necessary and wise alterations in the methods of dealing with goods received, cash takings, and other details which needed revision.

We recommend:—

1. The appointment of a Permanent Secretary and General Manager, having control over all accounts and purchases (subject to the approval of the Committee), and a general supervision of all shops, &c.
2. The appointment of a Clerk and Cashier to assist the Permanent Secretary.
3. That the present General Manager be instated as Shop Manager at the Central Grocery Stores, at a salary of £3 per week, with the special duty of conferring with the Permanent Secretary about purchases and the minor details of the business.
4. That a local firm of Public Accountants be employed to audit the books of the Society.

We have inquired into the theory set up at the Special Meetings to account for the loss in the Meat Department, viz., that meat was sold at a loss, and the accounts and stock manipulated to show a fictitious profit. Our Deputy Chairman and Secretary have examined the meat ledger and sheets, and they are satisfied that the reason given was in all probability correct. The documents mentioned substantiate the theory.

We consider the working expenses of our Society too high, and shall suggest at the Special Meeting means of remedying this.

We desire to see a better feeling shown at the meetings between the members and General Committee.

There is need of a better co-operation all round: between officials, members, and employés. It is the want of this that has caused our trouble.

But above all things we desire to restore the confidence of our members. We have pursued all our investigations from the first in this spirit, and we believe there is a glorious future for Co-operation in Bedminster if we are all determined to be loyal to our Stores and the cause, always bearing in mind, whether we are officials, members, or employés, we are Co-operators—workers together—for our mutual advantage and help.

J. CURLE, *Chairman.*
I. HAMBLIN, *Deputy Chairman.*
LL. J. PARFITT, *Secretary.*

In presenting this report it was further commented upon that the Butchery Manager had been allowed to keep his own books; that, although a proper delivery book had been suggested, he had evaded the point by declaring this was not the custom of the trade; that he had been permitted to collect large accounts in cash, and instead of cheques being made payable to the Society they were to the Manager's credit. The Auditors' report as to the unreliability of the meat checks was endorsed, and it was forcibly pointed out that but for the Committee's rather tardy suspicions no list of debtors might have been forthcoming at all. But the most serious point was that for the previous quarters debts had been accepted as stock, thus effectually hiding the serious nature of this very questionable business.

The report and recommendations were endorsed by the members at this Special Meeting, with the exception of that dealing with auditing, which was referred to the General Committee for consideration, and thus this nasty chapter in the Society's history closes. Its

effects, however, remained. The shadow of a confidence withdrawn hung over the officials for the next few years. Both trade and profits suffered, though without doubt the health of the Society improved. The lesson had been a sharp one, and it left its sting, but it was disciplinary. The policy of the future was slow but sure; that it was thoroughly justified will be seen in the results which accrued. A letter from the old Gloucester veteran, Mr. Joseph Clay, on the subject of the crisis is not without interest.

20, Stratton Road, Gloucester.

DEAR FRIEND BULLOCK,

I received your circular. I am sorry for what has happened. Still, I think it is all for the best, to put you on your guard against this class of men. I hope the members are not alarmed. Why, it was only the other day that Parr's Bank was robbed of £60,000, still it all came right in the end. So will this, and if there is anything I could do to help you in any way I would do it for you.

It shows how essential it is we should compel our Managers to support our own Wholesale. They will not do it without pressure is brought to bear on them—no tips there. We have nothing to give away there. It is our own Wholesale, and we ought to support our own shop. We are taking this matter in hand more than ever we have done before at Gloucester. It's no good to preach Co-operation without we carry the principle out fully. You will pardon me, I know. We ought to be honest and speak out.

I conclude with best wishes to you all, and hope you will take this as a warning not to place too much confidence in one man. If he is honest try and keep him honest by looking after him well.

Hoping you are enjoying the best of health,

I remain, yours respectfully,

JOSEPH CLAY.

DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Meat Department—	£	£	£
1900	3402	402	27
1901	4007	420	70
1902	4653	472	*47
1903	4249	485	*15
1904 (3 Quarters)	2396	301	*144

* Loss.

CHAPTER X.

IN order to detail the history of the crisis, other important developments which were taking place during the period have been passed over, and must now have attention.

Reference has been made already to some dissatisfaction which existed in regard to the Educational Department. The revision of rules in 1893 had not left the matter in an altogether satisfactory state, and in 1897 some of the younger members of the Society—out-and-out reformers—began to feel that they were being hampered in their efforts to idealise the Society through the clumsy machinery which then existed. One of these, with, perhaps, more zeal than discretion, went so far as to accuse the General Committee of having been a "wet blanket" in educational affairs. That this ardent spirit was thoroughly in earnest is seen in a resolution which he brought forward, calling upon the Committee to discard all other than Co-operative advertisements from the shops—too big a pill for the officials to swallow just then, especially from this doctor, but one which was quite cheerfully self-administered a few years later, when adversity had humbled their pride.

This controversy respecting the method of administering the educational fund dragged on. Conferences were held, but nothing of a satisfactory nature evolved. The General Committee very properly fell back upon the rules, which gave them the right to supervise; the reformers, on the other hand, urged that the common sense of the matter was to allow the educationists a freer hand. In other respects it had been found that the rules as amended in 1893 were not working smoothly. Moreover, the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1893

gave larger scope for the activities of the Co-operative movement, and this new charter was additional reason for the overhauling of rules. So in September, 1897, it was decided that they should be revised. This work was completed by September, 1898.

By the new rules the education difficulty was settled, taking the power of veto from the General Committee and making the Educational Committee directly responsible to the members. Other changes of a very special character were made, all of which were the results of ripe experience. Cards of membership were issued to those who had fully paid-up shares, and only upon production of these could entrance to the Society's meetings be obtained. Candidates for official positions had to have at least one fully paid-up share, must have dealt with the Society on the average to the extent of £4 per quarter, and must have been a member for at least one year. Obviously, such rules aimed at placing the affairs of the Society in the hands of those who were sincerely Co-operative, and who were not lacking in some little experience of Co-operation.

Another rule, which aimed at exalting the consumer at the expense of the capitalist, provided that the maximum interest upon shares should be credited, provided only that purchases had been made according to the following scale:—

Investment.	Purchases.
Up to £50	£2 per quarter.
£50 to £100	£4 ,, ,,
£100 to £150	£6 ,, ,,
£150 to £200	£8 ,, ,,

Otherwise only 2½ per cent to be allowed.

This principle of limiting the mere investing inducement of Co-operative trading is quite a healthy tendency, and it is being adopted by many Societies. For the investor out to find a safe 5 per cent the Co-operative movement, of late years, has been a happy hunting ground; but such, if they are nothing else, are parasites upon the

Co-operative ideal, and if unduly encouraged might eventually reduce Co-operation to a mere joint-stockism.

Another most important innovation was the organisation of machinery for the nomination of officers. Hitherto it had been the practice to accept nominations at the Quarterly Meeting. These now had to be made at least a month before the meeting, and lists of those nominated were to be posted in all the Society's places of business for a fortnight before the meeting. Publicity of this kind is always good; it inspires confidence all round. The aspirant to public honour is all the stronger if elected after such a test, and the mere fact of having these lists obtruded upon them is likely to quicken the members' interest in the affairs of the Society.

The year 1898 also saw a new policy adopted in respect to charitable grants. Hitherto these had been of a more or less spasmodic character, made chiefly towards relieving local distress. Now in March, 1898, it was boldly proposed that the medical institutions should be regularly considered when the Society's profits were being allocated. A good start was made by devoting £13. 13s. to the various infirmaries and hospitals. This has since crystallised into a systematic contribution.

In those days there was no lack of confidence, quite unlike the temporising of a former day. One welcomes the strong note "that future advances or reductions in bread were to be submitted to the Committee, as they intended to be masters of their own business, and not blindly follow the lead of the master bakers."

In September, 1898, the question of amalgamation with Keynsham was settled. In a meeting numbering seventy-one, forty-eight voted for, and five against, the proposal, and as a two-thirds majority was not obtained the matter was dropped.

It is possible that the overweening confidence of the Committee just then was responsible for much feeling which was exhibited at this meeting. The motion *re* the

suppression of competitive advertisements before referred to had been unaccountably left off the balance sheet, and recriminations ensued. The Society was on the crest of a high wave, and it was a time of testing for the officials, a time which should have called forth a dignified restraint, a quality which unfortunately was absent in the main. The new Auditor called upon the Society to depreciate their property in accordance with the rules, a practice which had never been properly observed. With fatalistic scorn he was told to leave such matters to the Committee, an incident which in itself is sufficiently clear indication that prudence had given place to arrogance.

The first six months of 1899 were absorbed by the crisis in the Butchery Department, one of the results arising from this episode being the resignation of the General Manager (Mr. E. Gingell). Prior to his appointment on April 17th, 1886, Mr. Gingell had been one of the Committee, earning his living at the colliery. For over thirteen years he guided the material part of the Society's business with credit and honour to himself, and to the satisfaction of the Committee and members. When he took office the turnover was £500 per quarter; when he left the position the sales had for some few quarters exceeded £13,000. One is bound to deplore the strictures which were passed upon him during the crisis, for it does seem that too little credit was accorded him for the general excellence of his services, considering all the circumstances. By his colleagues Mr. Gingell was held in the highest esteem and respect; and, on September 13th, 1899, an Employés' Social was arranged, to which their former Manager was invited, and presented with a beautiful marble timepiece, provided by the voluntary contributions of the employés, and tendered with many personal testimonies of appreciation.

The Society does not seem to have been fortunate in the selection of a successor to Mr. Gingell. A young man who had been managing the Branch at Raleigh Road was appointed. True, he came to the position at a critical moment; but during the two years he was Manager the

financial position of the Society did not improve, nor was there the happiest relationship between the workers in all departments.

The Annual Meeting in March, 1899, coming, as it did, when all was excitement and anticipation, made several changes in the constitution of the Committee, not the least among which was the election of Mr. John Curle as President. It was this gentleman who, as Auditor, had pointed out that depreciation was not being dealt with according to rule, and only two years previously, in concert with Mr. J. O'Grady, had been severely critical as to the Society's standard for labour conditions. There can be no doubt that his advent to the presidential chair steadied matters somewhat, and it was to that end he permitted himself to be nominated. As Chairman of the Investigation Committee he already had the confidence of the members; and it just needed the strong and trusted friend to stand by the Society while it steered for smoother waters. He saw the trouble through, and then yielded up the position, which but for these peculiar circumstances he would not have held. He was always a very busy man, with manifold and complex duties, all in the cause of the workers. The fifteen months he endured the responsibility of a Co-operative President's office was not the least among the services he has rendered to his fellows in Bristol.



ALDERMAN J. CURLE.

The Investigation Committee, it will be remembered, endorsed the growing feeling that the time was ripe for a permanent Secretary. Mr. Bullock having declined the post, recourse was had to advertising. On July 21st a Special Meeting of members was held to make the appointment. Out of forty-eight applications three were local aspirants, but in the opinion of the Committee their qualifications could not compare with those of the men from the North. Accordingly, by a unanimous vote, Mr. Gray, who had been for six years Assistant Secretary at Burnley, was appointed. This, of course, meant that Mr. A. Bullock, who had held the post for seven years, now was added to the Committee. For over fifteen years he had served the Society either as President, Treasurer, or Secretary, and, as was quite the customary thing with the members, a desire was expressed to show their appreciation in some tangible form. A sum of £12. 12s. was set apart for the purpose, and the new President, on December 12th, presented the late Secretary with a very handsome black marble timepiece, with vase side ornaments to match, as a token of esteem and appreciation for services rendered to the Society.

If the members were sometimes sharply critical, they knew how to be kind when occasion required; but none of their many acts of appreciation to officials could transcend this one. Mr. Albert Bullock was one of the Old Guard, who had wrestled continuously on behalf of Co-operation, here and elsewhere, manfully for over twenty years. He was at this time the Secretary of the South-Western Section of the Co-operative Union, having that year been elected to the Section at the top of the poll. His praises have been sung in many a village in Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, where he had been instrumental in laying the foundation and guarding the early structure of Societies now flourishing and strong. Since his election to the Committee in 1885 it is not too much to say that his life had been lived for the movement, and for once a prophet found honour in his own country. It shows the good sense of his friends that they let him feel their appreciation while he was yet with them.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
East Street, Bedminster, Grocery and Provision Dept.—	£	£	£
1900	9791	987	732
1901	7834	788	349
1902	7129	765	378
1903	6142	761	303
1904 (3 Quarters)	4637	600	290
Totterdown Branch—			
1900	10655	1108	825
1901	9778	975	626
1902	8598	933	389
1903	8514	1148	569
1904 (3 Quarters)	6624	893	381
Bedminster Baking Department—			
1900	7336	1844	1112
1901	7080	1681	1083
1902	7124	1628	1120
1903	7706	1674	1273
1904 (3 Quarters)	6659	1447	888
Bedminster Confectionery Dept.–			
1900	790	286	24
1901	994	291	29
1902	913	256	79
1903	996	260	78
1904 (3 Quarters)	777	225	*9
Bedminster Tailoring Dept.—			
1900	907	431	4
1901	942	385	29
1902	912	363	81
1903	881	401	26
1904 (3 Quarters)	681	310	55

* Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Bedminster Boot and Shoe Dept.–	£	£	£
1900	1332	397	41
1901	1288	375	105
1902	1200	391	71
1903	1066	355	74
1904 (3 Quarters)	803	265	32
Bedminster Boot Repairing Dept.–			
1903	123	55	67
1904 (3 Quarters)	129	42	40



CHAPTER XI.

BUT a few years ago Brislington was a village suburb of Bristol, nestling between a couple of hills, a picturesque reminiscence of other days. Now little remains to remind one of that rural simplicity it once enjoyed. The modern house builder has been at work, bricks and mortar have taken the place of hedgerows and mossy banks, and the electric tramcar hums where once the birds and bees made nature's harmony.

In 1899 the district was just opening up, and with commendable enterprise the Committee sought to take advantage of the opportunities offered to buy land; so, after viewing the district and negotiating with the owner, a piece 194 feet by 76 feet was purchased.

The Society was already too much embarrassed by financial matters to permit of anything being spent upon building just for the moment, and accordingly this deal had to be regarded as speculation pure and simple.

Meanwhile another district was developing; a large body of members living in the Chessels clamoured continually for a Branch Store. The Brislington venture for a time detracted attention from these, but they were not to be ignored. Accordingly, in June, 1900, it was arranged that a shop should be rented in Chessel Street, and on July 5th, 1900, it was opened as No. 4 Store by the Rev. Henry Anstey (Vicar of St. Aldhelm's), in whose parish it was situate. The reverend gentleman confessed "to a little hesitation in acting thus, since he had many friends among the traders, but he recognised that the future must belong either to the company shop or the Co-operative Store, and the latter would not cut, but sell honest wares in an honest manner, having regard to the wellbeing of its employés and the education of its members. Thus the system was worthy of support."

In less than a month from the opening the trade of this Branch was averaging £70 a week.

This gave an impetus to the movement in Brislington, and, as the Society still lacked the necessary capital wherewith to build on their own ground, it was decided to rent a shop near by in Sandy Park Road; and on Thursday, October 1st, the Rev. T. W. Harvey, an old friend of the movement in Bristol, then about to take up a living in another diocese, performed the opening ceremony. A month previous to this opening an informal meeting of members in the district had been held, and from among them a Local Committee had been selected, so that enthusiasm was already working in the neighbourhood. The Rev. T. W. Harvey addressed himself to the higher mission of Co-operation than mere dividend getting—the brotherhood and comradeship it engendered, as well as its tendency to improve the social condition of the people.

As a mark of their esteem, and as a souvenir of the occasion, Mr. Harvey was presented with a specially-bound copy of the C.W.S. "Annual," a never-failing memento of Co-operative gatherings.

This Branch quickly justified its existence, and it was soon felt that it was better situated for the trade of the district than would have been a shop built upon the Society's land. It was, therefore, decided to divide the land into ten lots, each with 17 feet frontage, with a view to letting ground rents for building, retaining the corner portion for a Store in the future. This speculation in land was a poor one; it never brought any grist to the Co-operative mill.

Notwithstanding these increases upon the outskirts, in general the trade of the Society did not move forward. A variety of reasons may be given to explain this : At the time it was variously urged that the late Manager, who had set up in business for himself, was taking some of the trade; or that markets were unfavourable, and owing to low profits, and consequently low dividends, members were disloyal.

The Committee inclined towards both conjectures, and there is evidence of much straining to declare higher dividends. First, the reserve fund was sacrificed, then amounts were carried forward in the accounts to mortgage

CHESSEL STREET BRANCH.





SANDY PARK ROAD BRANCH.

future profits. The Auditors at length protested against this unsafe method of finance. At the Quarterly Meeting in June, 1900, Mr. Appleby urged the desirability of being content with a smaller dividend, with a view to building up reserves. His remarks were assented to by more than one member present, and a notice of motion was put forward with a view to instructing the Committee to cease from anticipating profits in the future. The dividend this particular quarter was 1s. 8d., having been advanced from 1s. 6d. two quarters previously. The effect was seen in the following quarter, when the dividend again dropped to 1s. 6d. Ostensibly the market conditions were responsible, but upon the usual plan it would have still been possible to declare the higher amount and carry forward. Fortunately the Committee resisted the temptation and saved the situation just in the nick of time. Instead, a start was made to build up a reserve, £30 being set aside for the purpose. A series of bad quarters followed; profits were low, and the position was considerably aggravated through the members presenting checks in excess of sales. The Committee, in their report for the quarter ending October, 1900, drew special attention to this in the following manner:—

> We trust every member will do his or her best to send in every quarter regularly the checks in their possession. We regret to find there is considerable laxity here, as will be seen from the fact that this quarter we have £2,000 worth in excess of last, whereas the increased trade is £260. This means that we have to provide £133. 6s. 8d. more this quarter for dividend.

The amount recommended that quarter was 1s. 4d.

Meanwhile there were some few incidents during the period which closed the nineteenth and opened the twentieth century which indicate that the Co-operative leaven was working in real earnest. For instance, on August 1st a letter was received from the Trades Council pointing out that a notice had been posted by a well-known Bristol firm in their works, signed by the Directors, disapproving of trade unions, and offering certain inducements to prevent their employés from thus associating. Not content with closing their own account, the Committee approached the C.W.S.,

who had been doing business with the firm in question, but which as a result of these representations was stopped at once. Such actions are not to be regarded as merely retaliatory; they are largely necessary in self-defence. Such has been the grinding power of capital upon the workers in the past that it would be worse than folly on their part to yield an inch to its menaces.

A few weeks later we come across a welcome announcement than an all-round advance in wages had been conceded to the employés; and that, as a result of personal attention on the part of the President, certain grievances of the carters had been remedied. Inquiries were instituted as to how far apprentices were being treated as such, and taught both grocery and provisions trade, though no indication is given that the training was thereby rendered any more systematic. Still, the bare inquiry shows the spirit and temper of the time, which were decidedly in advance of those of any former period. But of all the significant items which have to be recorded none can excel in importance a notice of motion handed in by Mr. Curle at the Seventy-third Quarterly Meeting on Tuesday, December 11th, 1900, but which was not pressed: "That the question of amalgamation of the Bedminster and the Bristol and District Societies be considered and reported upon."

This was a dip into the future too far ahead even for the Editor of the Society's "Record," who cautiously delivered himself thus: "Without expressing any opinion one way or the other, we submit the proposal is important enough to demand careful thought and attention." A not over-inspiring lead; but perhaps it is necessary even for Co-operative editors to be discreet!

Another interesting proposal from the Raleigh Road members urged that drapery should be stocked at their Branch. The Committee, however, resisted the demand, asserting that this business required concentration at some central spot. That Committee was wise in its generation. One of the features about drapery and kindred businesses is the variety and extent of stock required. Only a large business, concentrated and

thoroughly organised in respect to departmental requirements, can hope to successfully cater for the modern exactions of fashion and prejudice, and it is evident that, in a measure, this was realised.

The extraordinary staleness which seems to have affected the members generally at this period, as evidenced by small attendances at meetings, is counterbalanced by these evidences of vitality on the part of a few enthusiasts and the officials, for trade returns were far from encouraging. The Butchery Department was still proving itself a drain upon the profits, and the Confectionery Department was not at all satisfactory from the same point of view, and these were sufficient to embarrass the Committee without the knowledge that members were coldly indifferent. But this was not all; the new Secretary was proving to be a hindrance rather than a help. A Sub-Committee was appointed to investigate alleged irregularities, and upon their report being presented to a meeting of members on September 18th, 1900, it was decided to accept his resignation. Much feeling was exhibited at the meetings upon this and other matters—

> The criticisms were not of a favourable character, motives being impugned and even personalities imported which did not add to the comfort or dignity of the individuals referred to.

Thus reported the Editor of the local "Wheatsheaf."

The Quarterly Meeting in September, 1900, was responsible for another important method of organisation. The success which had followed the efforts of Local Councils in the Bristol and District Society suggested the formation of similar bodies in Bedminster; and the General Committee recommended the appointment of Local Committees, whose business it should be to organise the propaganda around each Store. Much good work was done by these Committees, but the organisation appears to have been somewhat loose, and, for lack of definite direction, eventually led to duplication of energy and some disappointment. The success of the Bristol and District Council system was due largely to its spontaneous evolution from a combination of circumstances which favoured its creation. Moreover, no Educational

Committee existed in addition. As a consequence, responsibility was clearly and definitely centred in each locality, and a spirit of friendly rivalry fostered, which for a time acted as an incentive to good works. At Bedminster it was never quite clear how far the Educational Committee was the complement or the guiding spirit of the Local Committees, or *vice versâ*, and at times there was discord where there should have been harmony.

The resignation of Mr. Gray as Secretary unfortunately led to more friction among the officials; and, led by that individual, some ardent spirits founded an opposition Society, which set up business in West Street, and for a few years hampered the progress of the old Society.

Meanwhile, after due care and deliberation, a Special Committee recommended Mr. Gerald Gait for the acceptance of he members as Secretary. Mr. Gait, it will be remembered, was appointed as Cashier in 1892, having at that time been a few years in the Society's employ as Chief Clerk. On November 27th, 1900, selected from a number of applicants, he was accepted, upon the Committee's nomination, for the vacant post, upon a three months' trial. Always of a modest disposition, it must have given Mr. Gait great satisfaction to know that his untiring efforts in the cause were now to be recognised. He had devoted himself, not only to the interests of the Bedminster Society, but in his spare time had been of material assistance to other Societies in the vicinity of Bristol. At this time he was Auditor for Shirehampton and Avonmouth, Weston-super-Mare, and Cheddar Societies. For a comparatively young man in a subordinate position this in itself was a strong recommendation, but the Committee placed on record their reasons for selecting him as the fittest candidate in terms which left nothing to be desired:—

1. Because of the satisfactory way in which the work has been performed since the departure of Mr. Gray.
2. By reason of the excellent testimonial as to his fitness from the Society's Auditors.
3. Because of the extreme need of the Society having at the present time someone whose interest and sympathy can be absolutely relied upon.

A more eulogistic testimonial one could not wish for, and it only remains to be said that Mr. Gait retained that well-earned confidence until the end.

Under the comprehensive title of "Co-operative Workers," the General Committee, Local Committees, Educational Committee, and employés occasionally met together, and much valuable educational work was performed by discussing the affairs of the Society in particular, and the ideals of Co-operation in general. From these meetings reforms of all kinds adumbrated.

In January, 1901, it was decided to start window dressing. The logic of Co-operative shopkeeping is, of course, opposed to this system, and Committees are quite naturally reluctant to expose goods to the risk of deterioration by using them for mere purposes of display. But, with proper safeguards, this risk may be reduced to a minimum, and Co-operators have everything to gain from the exhibition of their own wares, "hall-marked" as they are by a guarantee that the labour expended upon their production and distribution has been carefully regarded, and also that they represent the highest standard of purity and excellence to the consumer.

A proposal which was not so favourably received was that of arranging District Quarterly Meetings, being lost upon a motion at the Quarterly Meeting in September, 1901.

Co-operators, it is true, are social reformers, almost republican in their tendencies, but they are not unmindful of the respect and honour which is due to those who worthily fill the chief places in our present system; and one is not surprised to find a minute recording their sense of loss at the death of Queen Victoria in the early days of 1901.

The echo of an old controversy was heard in the March of that year, for again the Society was in conflict with the Bakers' Union, the Trades Council intervening. This time, however, the Committee displayed great tact and forbearance. Profiting by experience gained on former occasions, they met the deputations in a friendly spirit of give and take, the result being that an amicable arrangement was arrived at without serious friction. The question of payment for overtime was conceded to the

staff, and a reorganisation of work ensued which obviated the necessity for any such payment in the future.

A rather less encouraging note was sounded a few months later, when, upon a proposal to increase the General Manager's salary, it was decided to bind him not to open business within a radius of three miles from any Branch. It is true there was some justification for the injunction, seeing that a former Manager was harassing them close to their Central premises, and a former Secretary, as leader in the opposition Store, was as a thorn in the other side. Yet one cannot but feel that there was a certain loss of dignity and self-respect to the Society in adopting this weak device of the private trader to secure himself against competition.

It is interesting to recall a labour dispute of a unique kind, during September, 1901, when the men and boys in the service of the Bristol Tramways Company were locked out, owing to a dispute between the Company and themselves as to hours and rates of pay. The dispute caused a great deal of excitement in Bristol at the time, and there was considerable sympathy expressed for the employés, some of whom were without doubt members. or were closely related to members of the Co-operative Societies. At the Quarterly Meeting the members showed their sympathy in a practical manner by directing that an amount of £5 should be distributed in kind among the families who were affected by the struggle.

BRANCH STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Brislington Branch—	£	£	£
1900	584	78	18
1901	3235	323	151
1902	3117	324	158
1903	3221	395	199
1904 (3 Quarters)	2837	344	204
Chessels Branch—			
1900	1887	202	88
1901	3168	329	177
1902	3143	312	245
1903	3243	396	159
1904 (3 Quarters)	2708	328	187

CHAPTER XII.

EARLY in December, 1901, Mr. W. Jones (Manager) resigned his post. The results of the quarter had been anything but satisfactory, and there appeared to be leakages in profit not sufficiently accounted for. With a view to checking this kind of thing for the future, it was resolved that a leakage account should be kept, and that the Manager should be held responsible for shortages. This proposition Mr. Jones declined, and tendered his resignation, which was accepted.

The financial position of the Society just now was very critical, and a good dividend was felt to be essential to save the situation. The fund which had been created as a plate-glass insurance, as well as the reserve fund, were utilised, and the Auditors permitted depreciation upon nominal instead of original value. By such means it was found possible to scrape together sufficient to pay 1s. 3d. in the £. The members were not altogether satisfied, and some pertinent questions were put at the Quarterly Meeting, but eventually the position was accepted.

Meanwhile the management was left in the hands of the Secretary (Mr. Gerald Gait) for three months. Two appointments were made, but in both cases the Society concerned would not part with their men. It is interesting to note that the first candidate was Mr. Newton Smith, who had rendered such splendid service to the sister Society, the Bristol and District, up till a few years previously, at this time the Manager of Edmonton Society. His Committee pressed him not to leave them, and he consented to remain, much to the disappointment of the Bedminster friends.

Next Mr. Ashley (Dudley) was interviewed, and he accepted the post, a date being fixed when he should commence his duties. A week or so before that date, however, an intimation was received that, owing to the

need of Dudley Society, and the pressure of his Committee, he, too, wished to be relieved of the engagement.

This was most unfortunate, as members were beginning to be restless and disquieted at the apparent makeshift policy being extended over so long a period. Accordingly Mr. Bullock (the President) was sent to Dudley to investigate. Upon his return it was found that there was real cause for the Dudley Society's concern at losing Mr. Ashley at this juncture; and, as they expressed themselves willing to compensate, the Bedminster Committee agreed to accept £15. 15s. and look out for another candidate.

This time their choice fell upon Mr. Rimmington, who came with excellent references from the Langley Mill Society. He was appointed on February 22nd, 1902, and commenced his duties a fortnight later. Mr. Rimmington was a man of forcible character, orderly, methodical, and conscientious in his work. He kept a keen eye upon the staff, and understood the wiles of the shirker. He quickly set to work reorganising the business. Old debts were placed in the hands of a collector, and each member of the staff found that his doings were subjected to a close scrutiny by a practised eye. As a consequence some changes took place; weaklings had to give place to stronger men; and for a time, at any rate, the question of increased trade and profits had to stand aside while the whole business was being remodelled.

In April, 1902, it was pointed out by one of the Committee to his colleagues that Mr. Gray had left the neighbourhood, and that an opportunity thereby presented itself to hold out the olive branch to the dissentients at West Street. The thought was a kindly one, but the Committee knew the men concerned, and realised that the sanguine hopes of their colleague would not be materialised in that way.

The proposal to affiliate with the Labour Electoral Association, brought forward in June, 1902, did not find favour. The members rejected the idea upon the plea that "the financial position *and other conditions* do not warrant our joining." There seems to be a world of meaning behind this phraseology. There is an instinctive



MANAGERS OF BEDMINSTER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

shrinking among a large proportion of Co-operators from associating the movement with controversial ideas, and, except in a very abstract sense, religion and politics are kept out of Co-operative discussions.

Meanwhile one has to note that the Society was still suspect in regard to labour and labour conditions. As recently as September, 1902, it is evident that the wages and conditions of employment questions were still disturbing the minds of some members, for a motion was brought forward that the list of employés, with wages paid, should be open for inspection at the office of the Society. This proposal was stoutly resisted by the Committee, on the grounds that these were matters of management, and consequently the concern of the Committee. The employés objected also to have their personal affairs made public.

In November, 1902, one of the pioneers, Mr. J. Garrett, passed away. He was one who, in the early days, had served the Society as an elected employé, and whose homely manner and kindly disposition had endeared him to many. A vote of condolence was forwarded to the family.

The Committee's desire for economy occasionally led them to be parsimonious. The call of the Co-operative world for a defence fund against the attacks of the traders was met by them with a proposal to guarantee £50. This was subsequently doubled when it was pointed out that their offer compared poorly with those from Societies of a similar size. But these matters, after all, were the flotsam and jetsam. The real history of the period centred in trade and trading methods.

For two years after Mr. Rimmington's appointment there was considerable uncertainty quarter by quarter as to how the results would figure out; but eventually the strong, business-like policy had its effect, and by the date of amalgamation the Society was in a thoroughly sound condition. There were several factors which contributed to this state of affairs. First, the loyalty and good sense of a compact body of members, who could discern that, behind the falling trade and fluctuating

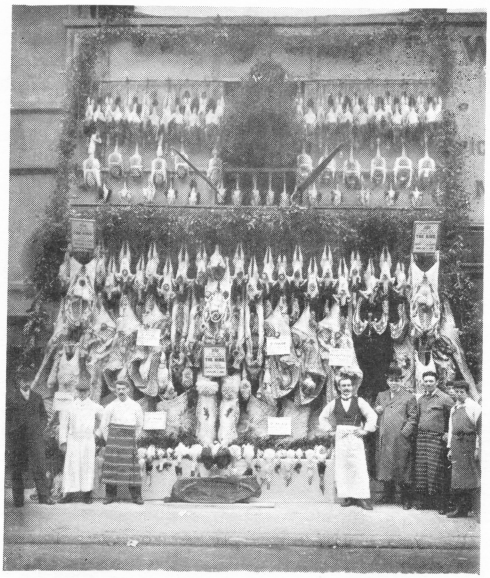
profits, principles were being maintained as never before; and secondly, there was an element of verve and alertness about the management which inspired confidence. So far as the business was concerned, everything was done to place the Store in the front rank of the Bristol trade. Two small but significant instances will suffice to show how the imagination of the customers was captured. At a cost of over £100 apiece eight cash registers were purchased; and, apart from their value for check purposes, they undoubtedly did something to impress the public with the up-to-date methods of the Society. The Branch at Totterdown, too, was taken in hand and completely renovated and enlarged. This was completed by Messrs. Parnell and Sons in February, 1903, and the imposing shop was opened on March 4th with great rejoicing. It is not contended that these actions were ultimately wise, but they are cited to illustrate the tendency there was to cater for the applause of the crowd. As a matter of fact, it is altogether questionable whether the cash registers have justified their introduction from a utilitarian point of view, and they could certainly be bought much cheaper to-day; but for the time being they were a good advertisement, and that was badly needed. It is interesting to note that the Auditors insisted upon these fixtures being very heavily depreciated, much against the judgment of the officials. Subsequent events have proved how sound was that insistence of the Auditors. This was only one of many careful provisos brought forward from the same source, and amply demonstrates the wisdom which retained competent Co-operative experts for this important duty.

Thus, although the Committee had to report decreasing sales and fluctuating profits during these years, all the while real progress was being made. To the outsider, and to some insiders, the Bedminster Society appeared to be in a decline, but, as a matter of fact, the whole period was one of consolidation. At the finish the Society was sounder financially by reason of the wise conservation of profits, stronger in the faith of its members, who had been invigorated by the ordeal, proved by the fires of adversity.

But the "old Adam" still lingered, and much of this history-making seems to have been unconscious, so far as many of the leaders were concerned. For instance, when the quarter ending July, 1902, resulted in a reduced profit, as a matter of policy the Committee recommended utilising £25 from the scanty reserve fund for dividend purposes. At the Quarterly Meeting the members were by no means unanimously in favour of this course, an amendment being proposed that the dividend be dropped 1d. instead, and a third of those attending agreed with this suggestion. The instincts of these members were truer than the policy of the Committee, whose outlook was limited through their desire to increase the dividend. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the limitations of a "dividend" policy than the records of Societies who have met with reverses. These amply prove that folk who are mere bargain hunters are a doubtful asset to any Society. In a private concern the trader relies upon his "connection" for main support. The tie is a purely sentimental one, and is largely the result of real or fancied advantages either in quality or price of goods offered to the public. Co-operators always have a valuable asset in the quality of their own goods, and, on the whole, their prices will compare favourably with the traders'. But too much insistence upon the dividend puts these facts into the background and unsettles the faith of members, or damages that which corresponds to the "connection" of the trader. Granted that a large dividend may and does usually bring increased trade, it is questionable whether, for permanent good to the Co-operative movement, this business of catering for the best bargain had not better belong to the competitive world until the principles of Co-operation are better understood. Not only does this policy cut right through the Co-operative ideal, but it leads to a weakening of financial stability.

One would have thought that the leaders in Bedminster had had sufficient experience of trouble to make them cautious in this respect, but the all-absorbing idea of a substantial return had laid hold of them, and they were

inclined to subordinate other considerations to this one. They even went so far as to suggest to the Auditors that depreciation might be left over for a quarter. Luckily, the members had entrusted this duty to professional men, and Co-operators at that. They were proof against the suggestion, and their strength effectually prevented the Society from being launched upon another down gradient.



CHRISTMAS DISPLAY, BEDMINSTER BUTCHERING DEPARTMENT.

For the pill had to be swallowed. Prodigality and loose management in the past had brought about a chaotic condition of thingswhich could not be set straight by mere patchings, and so the Committee had to find. Profits for the quarter endingOctober, 1902, were worse than ever, and only 1s. dividend, still helped by the reserve fund, could be declared; and not until the middle of 1903 did the real state of affairs materially alter for good. By that time the economies and closer methods of management began to make themselves felt, and confidence was entirely restored.

One department alone gave cause for anxiety—that old offender, the Meat Department. Notwithstanding that the Society had secured a contract from the Board of

Guardians, thus helping to keep the sales upon what should have been a paying basis, losses continued to be shown. That the department had been a serious drag upon the other departments will be seen from the following statement :—

THREE YEARS' RETURNS OF MEAT DEPARTMENT, SHOWING TO WHAT EXTENT IT HAD BEEN A BURDEN TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS FOR DIVIDEND.

Quarter.	Sales.	Profits.	Loss.	Expenses.	Dividend Calculated on Sales. *
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
April, 1901 ..	1020 4 2	12 2 6½	....	80 18 8	46 4 1½
„ 1902 ..	1072 2 6	12 19 0	....	86 6 3	45 16 0
„ 1903 ..	1174 19 3½	....	21 9 10	98 6 11	73 1 2
July, 1900 ..	740 19 8	....	43 15 8½	73 3 8	91 0 8½
„ 1901 ..	924 18 9½	....	2 10 6	72 17 8	56 5 2
„ 1902 ..	1149 9 11	....	42 14 11	88 8 1	103 6 2
Oct., 1900 ..	834 18 10	31 7 3	....	73 14 5	16 19 5
„ 1901 ..	967 11 11	12 3 5	....	73 19 8	40 10 4
„ 1902 ..	1123 11 9	....	22 4 7½	87 0 10	66 6 7½
Jan., 1901 ..	1038 3 2½	46 13 5	....	81 3 2	17 8 8
„ 1902 ..	1094 13 8½	48 14 0	....	85 17 0	14 14 0
„ 1903 ..	1307 8 3½	4 17 0½	....	95 14 9	54 4 9½
Total.....£	112449 2 0½	168 16 8	132 15 7	661 18 3	625 17 2

* *Less* Ham (Green), Hides and Skins, and Non-members' Purchases. Where a profit occurs it is deducted from the total in the final column, and a loss is added.

There was a net trade profit for this period of £36. 1s. 1d., an average of £3 per quarter.

MEAT DEPARTMENT EXPENSES.

Expenses which would have disappeared if the department had been closed—

Wage—Distributive	£49 4 8
„ Productive	24 12 4
Carting	5 0 0
	£78 17 0

Expenses which would remain, and increase the general expenses—						
Interest on Stocks				£2	13	0
Rents, Rates, and Taxes				20	12	6
General Expenses				25	16	9
				£49	2	3
Fixed Expenses brought down				£49	2	3
Less Income resulting from closing:—						
Lighting per quarter	£2	0	0			
Rent of Premises	10	0	0			
Horse Keep, 2 horses, 8s. per week	10	8	0			
				22	8	0
Representing Net Total to be Added to Expenses				£26	14	3

There was much talk about closing up, but in view of their contract it was felt that public opinion might be unnecessarily alarmed were this to be done, so it was decided again to reorganise. The Manager was instructed to spend more time in the shop, and to buy in home markets; the area of delivery was restricted somewhat, and a clerk was dispensed with. This scheme was placed before the members and agreed to by them in September, 1903.

At the Quarterly Meeting on December 3rd, 1903, however, it was seen that the position was worse, and the department came in for severe criticism, as an outcome of which a Special Committee of Investigation was formed to overhaul the department and report at a later date. A general feeling had been expressed that this department had been unduly loaded with expense in respect to establishment charges, and one of their first steps was to place upon record that—

> In the opinion of this Committee the method of charging expenses is not the best suited to this Society, and we consider that all indirect and establishment charges, rents, &c., should be charged to profit and loss account, and not to expenses account, and that this resolution be sent to General Committee with a view to their opening up the matter with the Auditors.

Thereupon representations were made by the Committee to the Auditors, who, however, would not agree with the suggestions put forward. The Committee pressed the matter, but the Auditors would not give way, and

after some considerable correspondence Mr. Wood attended a Special Committee Meeting, but still resisted the pressure. The matter, therefore, had to be brought to the Quarterly Meeting of members in March, where Mr. Wood explained that this system had a scientific basis, and was in practice with over 100 Societies. They were willing as Auditors to certify a simpler trade account, set out in general terms, leaving the Committee to prepare and submit their own dissection account, but they could only certify a dissection account which placed upon each department its proper share of establishment charges.

The report of the Special Investigation Committee was placed before the members, who accepted the proposals contained therein, excepting No. 1, thereby showing their confidence in their Auditors.

REPORT OF SPECIAL MEAT COMMITTEE.

FELLOW-MEMBERS,

The Special Committee appointed to investigate the conduct of your Butchery Department beg to report as follows :—

They have fully inquired into the question of expenses charged, and find that the amount of £118. 11s. 6d. for October (1903) quarter is made up of:—

	£	s.	d.
Wages paid to persons employed in working the shop	65	12	0
Interest on Stocks	0	9	0
Carting and Delivery	7	0	0
Rents, Rates, and Taxes	21	0	0
General Expenses	24	10	6
Total	118	11	6

They do not agree with this method of allotting expenses to the different departments, and have, through the General Committee, taken up the question with the Auditors.

Briefly, the present system is to charge the *balance* of expenses over and above actual wages paid in each department, carting, and interest on stocks, to two accounts. Certain items are posted to rents, rates, and taxes account, and others to general expenses account, and these are divided—the former on the area covered by each shop, and the latter at so much in the £ on its sales.

Under this system, in their opinion, the butchery is overcharged with expenses. To ascertain how much, would necessitate going through the books of the Society for the quarter.

On the other hand, they have prepared an estimate of the out-of-pocket cost to the Society of keeping the department open, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
Wages paid persons employed in working the shop...	65	12	0
Actual Rates, Taxes, Water, and Light, and Estimated Rental	14	15	1
Depreciation on Utensils, Paper, Sundries.....	1	15	0
Printing and Stationery	1	0	0
Interest on Capital employed in the department, say £200 at 5 per cent per annum	2	10	0
Carting and Delivery—Keep of 1½ horses, at 8s. each per week	7	16	0
Depreciation on Value of Horses and Rolling Stock...	3	5	0
Total	96	13	1

Against £118. 11s. 6d., as charged, and the difference of £21. 18s. 5d. would represent the charge to be borne by other departments if the butchery were closed.

Advertising is not included, as the space in the "Wheatsheaf" and on programmes would have to be paid for in any case.

No allowance is made for upkeep of stables, as this charge would remain if the shop were not in existence.

They are unable to recommend the closing of the department. Apart from all questions of Co-operation and the duty of the Society to supply its members with their wants, they would remind you that from the quarter ending January, 1900 (the earliest date at which departmental accounts have been kept), to quarter ending April, 1902, the business was carried on at a profit. Seven quarters showed a total profit of £198. 13s. 2d., and three quarters a total loss of £52. 7s. 4¼d. But from that date (April, 1902) to October, 1903, five quarters showed a total loss of £120. 14s. 1½d., and one quarter only a profit of £4. 17s.

In their opinion the right thing to do is to make the department pay, and this result will best be ensured by—

1. Charging actual (and not estimated) working expenses.

2. Introducing a modern cash register.

3. Placing the department under the supervision of the General Manager, whose special duty it should be—

(*a*) To check the "dead" weight of all meat bought by hand.

(*b*) To be at liberty to attend the markets with the Head Butcher.

(*c*) To check the cash register at such times as he shall think desirable.

4. Charging the prices current in the neighbourhood for all meat sold. In their opinion prices now charged are in excess of this.

5. Proper attention being paid to delivery. They regret to have to report numerous complaints under this head, especially in the Totterdown district, where frequently the round has not been completed by dinner time.

In their opinion if these reforms are carried out an increase of trade and profit will naturally follow, and enable the Society to open more shops for the greater convenience of its members.

We further recommend that a circular shall be sent to our members drawing attention to the department and showing the current prices of meat.

Dated March 8th, 1904.

The department struggled through a further nine months, and was then closed by resolution of the members.



CHAPTER XIII.

IT is interesting to note how in one respect after another the two Societies in Bristol and Bedminster approximated towards the same ideal.

The demand for a milk supply seems to have arisen in both Societies almost spontaneously. The Committee of Bedminster were naturally slow to respond; their experience of " outside " departments had been none too encouraging, and in 1903 they were not prepared to risk any more. They put aside the suggestion upon the plea of having their hands full and the difficulty of tackling a business incurring such a heavy rate of expense just then.

Towards the end of 1903 the affairs of the Bristol and District Society were influencing those of Bedminster in a special sense. Amalgamation was freely talked of. This partook mostly of the nature of gossip; it was certainly quite unofficial, but of sufficient significance to induce Mr. Rimmington to apply for the post rendered vacant at the Bristol and District Society upon Mr. Lloyd's resignation. This was on November 10th. A week later he withdrew, partly persuaded by his own Committee, but swayed even more by the fact that neither Committee, as a responsible body, seemed agreeable even to talk about amalgamation. The movement, however, gathered adherents as time went on. At the December Quarterly Meeting a resolution standing in the names of Messrs. S. C. Pope and W. E. Tiley, very earnestly moved by the former gentleman, was discussed with great vigour. This resolution read as follows:—

That, with a view to promoting amalgamation between the two local Societies, a Joint Conference of their representatives be held.

Mr. Pope, who, as a student of Co-operation, had exact knowledge upon the point, instanced the tendency towards amalgamation evidencing itself generally in the movement, and referred to the fact that the Co-operative Union agreed with the principle. An amendment, " That the matter be referred to the Committee," was lost; but a further amendment affirming the principle was carried. It was further directed that this information should be sent to the Bristol and District Society, but no time was stated, and in their wisdom this was interpreted by the Committee to mean after the Bristol and District members had discussed a similar resolution. This meant hanging the matter up for at least six months. But those who were backing this agitation meant to gain their point, and, despite all the obstacles which confronted them from time to time, we know now that eventually the field was won, and amalgamation was effected.

On February 4th, 1904, Mr. A. Bullock intimated his intention of retiring from the presidency. Two candidates were put forward, and in March the members decided in favour of Mr. Joseph Marks by a large majority. At this time Mr. Marks had served as a Committee-man for 8¾ years, and had given signal proof of his untiring zeal and devotion to the Society's interests. A man of even temperament, he always brought to the consideration of affairs a practical, well-balanced judgment. He was among the few who sought to stay the headlong career of the wholesale butchering experiment, and he was among the first to acknowledge the worth of a policy of wise retrenchment such as was to a great extent pursued during the management of Mr. Rimmington. As Chairman, Mr. Marks blows neither hot nor cold, but he holds the reins firmly, and these qualities have won for him the respect of Co-operators in Bristol.

On March 4th, 1904, the Committee definitely accepted the principle of a minimum wage of 24s. for adult employés as fixed by the A.U.C.E. This somewhat tardy recognition was but another indication of their approximation towards Bristol and District standards.

Singularly enough, in one respect they adopted a policy which the Bristol and District had only just recently condemned. The Committee deliberately approached Mr. Rimmington with the proposal that he should become responsible for the general management of the business, which, after a little consideration, he agreed to. This might have told against amalgamation, for one of the difficulties to be overcome in respect thereto was the adjustment of employés' positions, and it was quite evident that Bristol and District members would not have departed from the principle of departmental management. However, Mr. Rimmington did not hold the position long; in less than six weeks he handed in his resignation. The general favour being shown towards amalgamation proposals disturbed him, and, a leading position being offered in a private company, he cut the gordian knot, and retired from a position which he could readily estimate was fast becoming untenable.

This action of Mr. Rimmington's brought amalgamation into the immediate sphere of practical politics. What opposition there had been almost died out, and all developments were stayed till a final decision was arrived at. Monthly meetings of members had been spoken of, but in view of amalgamation no move was made. No fresh Manager was appointed, Mr. Gerald Gait being entrusted with the supervision of both secretarial and management duties. The coming-of-age celebrations, for the expenses of which £25 had been reserved, were also put off, and during the winter of 1904 the funds were utilised to help those members distressed through unemployment. The establishment of a permanent fund for this purpose was proposed, and the principle adopted.

The question of Shirehampton and Avonmouth amalgamation with Bristol and District was brought to the notice of the Bedminster Committee on December 9th, 1904, and they signified their approval of the step.

On February 2nd, 1905, Keynsham Society applied to Bedminster to be taken over as a Branch. Notwithstanding that this Society had struggled on comparatively

well for 10½ years, they were finding that their primitive methods and lack of capital were preventing them from impressing the people of the place adequately, and, seeing the move towards amalgamation being made in Bristol, the time seemed opportune for an appeal to be made. The Bedminster Committee immediately set inquiries upon foot as to the condition of the Keynsham Society and the possibility of securing better premises. A report was given to the Quarterly Meeting on March 14th, and the members endorsed their Committee's action. A public meeting was organised in Keynsham, and held on April 3rd. Great enthusiasm prevailed at that meeting, and it appeared that, given ordinarily favourable conditions as to premises and stock, there was a very reasonable prospect of a highly successful Branch being opened up. Accordingly, on Thursday, April 20th, a Special Meeting of members was held to receive and consider a resolution recommending amalgamation with Keynsham and District Co-operative Society. It was pointed out by the Chairman (Mr. Marks), who moved the resolution, that the Society was financially sound, with a membership of sixty, and that an examination of the books and stock showed they possessed assets £20 in excess of liabilities. Without hesitation the necessary resolutions were passed unanimously. This was confirmed at another Special Meeting held on May 18th, and on June 24th another Branch was thereby added to the Bedminster Co-operative Society.

On February 10th, 1904, one of the Bedminster Committee reported that it might be possible to include the dissentient Society in West Street with the general amalgamation scheme. The Committee, however, would do nothing official, though they showed a disposition to consider the position if overtures were made. Accordingly, on February 14th, a deputation from West Street waited upon them and asked for consideration of the proposed scheme. As a result of this meeting the matter was referred to the Joint Committee upon Amalgamation, from whom a Sub-Committee was appointed to further investigate the position of the Society. The result of

these investigations showed that the West Street Society was in a hopeless condition, the whole of their capital being swallowed up in claims from creditors. Under the circumstances amalgamation was out of the question; their only course was to liquidate. This was eventually decided upon. Meanwhile the Bedminster Committee did the next best thing: they offered to take the members of the dying Society into their own membership without payment of entrance fee, agreeing among themselves that if at the General Meeting the matter was questioned, they would share the liability incurred. Thus they demonstrated their Co-operative zeal and sympathy.

The resolutions for amalgamation with the Bristol and District Society were finally passed after much controversy at a meeting held on June 17th, and confirmed on July 4th, and after completion of the quarter then proceeding the Bedminster Society merged into the larger constitution of the Bristol Co-operative Society.

As usual, the members were not slow to show their appreciation of those who had rendered services. Out of the profits of the quarter a substantial sum was set aside for the purpose of making presentations to the President and Secretary, and, at the conclusion of the last Quarterly Meeting, the ninety-second of the Bedminster Co-operative Society, these presentations were made—to Mr. J. Marks a gold watch and chain, the former suitably inscribed; to Mr. G. Gait a gold watch and a cheque. On behalf of the members Mr. Dufty made the presentation to the President, who then did similar honour to Mr. Gait. A further pleasant surprise awaited Mr. Gait in a testimonial from his fellow-employés, which took the form of a silver tea service, presented on their behalf by the President (Mr. Marks).

In this kindly service of appreciation and mutual good-will Bedminster Co-operators heralded the dawn of a new era for Co-operation in Bristol, looking forward with confident hope to a future of larger opportunity and increasing usefulness.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

PRESIDENTS.

Mr. I. STEEDS	2½	years	1882 to 1885.
,, J. PARFITT	1	,,	1885 to 1886.
,, W. W. LANE	2¾	,,	1886 to 1888.
,, A. BULLOCK	5¼	,,	1889 to 1890, 1900 to 1904.
,, J. REED	2¾	,,	1890 to 1893.
,, J. F. HOPKINS	5	,,	1893 to 1898.
,, H. J. POPE	1	,,	1898 to 1899.
,, J. CURLE	1½	,,	1899 to 1900.
,, J. MARKS	1½	,,	1904 to 1905.

TREASURERS.

Mr. I. HAMBLIN	4½	years	1882 to 1887.
,, J. F. HOPKINS	3¾	,,	1887 to 1890.
,, A. BULLOCK	2¾	,,	1890 to 1893.
,, J. REED	1	,,	1893 to 1894.
,, J. C. MORTIMER	4	,,	1894 to 1899.

(Office abolished upon Banking with C.W.S. in 1899.)

SECRETARIES.

Mr. J. PARFITT	6	months	1882 to 1883.
,, W. W. LANE	1¾	years	1883 to 1885
,, J. F. HOPKINS	4¾	,,	1885 to 1887, 1890 to 1893.
,, I. HAMBLIN	3¼	,,	1887 to 1890.
,, A. BULLOCK	6½	,,	1893 to 1899.
,, WILLIAM GRAY	1	,,	1899 to 1900.
,, GERALD GAIT	4½	,,	1901 to 1905.

COMMITTEE-MEN.

Mr. J. GARRETT	12¾	years	1883 to 1884, 1885 to 1886, 1887 to 1891, 1892 to 1893, 1894, 1895 to 1900.
,, W. GRIFFIN	11¼	,,	1893 to 1899, 1899 to 1901, 1902 to 1905.
,, T. R. COX	9¼	,,	1887 to 1890, 1899 to 1904.
,, J. FORSE	8¾	,,	1886 to 1887, 1897 to 1902. 1903 to 1905.
,, J. MARKS	8¾	,,	1895 to 1904.
,, J. I. HUNTINGDON	8¼	,,	1888 to 1893, 1894 to 1895, 1897.
,, C. HALLIDAY	8	,,	1890 to 1898.

COMMITTEE-MEN—*continued.*

Mr. G. BURNELL	7¾ years		1886 to 1887, 1889 to 1890, 1893 to 1897.
,, J. EDGELL	6¼	,,	1882 to 1883, 1884 to 1885, 1886, 1890 to 1894.
,, H. J. POPE	7¼	,,	1888 to 1891, 1894 to 1898.
,, W. CHYNOWETH	6¼	,,	1887 to 1890, 1891 to 1894.
,, W. H. BROOKS	6¼	,,	1894 to 1898, 1900 to 1902.
,, J. HALFYARD	6	,,	1895 to 1899, 1903 to 1905.
,, A. BULLOCK	5¾	,,	1885 to 1888, 1899 to 1900, 1904 to 1905.
,, T. HALL	5½	,,	1888 to 1889, 1891 to 1892, 1894 to 1895.
,, J. WRIGHT	5¼	,,	1885, 1890 to 1894.
,, J. SPARKS	5¼	,,	1884 to 1886, 1889 to 1890, 1890 to 1891.
,, A. E. COCKBAINE	5¼	,,	1889 to 1904.
,, T. B. FOXLEY	5	,,	1888 to 1893.
,, G. KNIGHT	5	,,	1899 to 1902, 1903, 1904 to 1905.
,, E. C. S. TANNER	5	,,	1900 to 1905.
,, E. T. POBJOY	4½	,,	1899 to 1903.
,, J. C. BELK	4¼	,,	1899 to 1903.
,, J. H. RUSSELL	4	,,	1884 to 1887, 1890 to 1891.
,, H. EDBROOKE	3¾	,,	1883 to 1885, 1886, 1887 to 1888.
,, C. WHITE	3¾	,,	1890 to 1894.
,, U. E. HARRISON	3¾	,,	1893 to 1897.
,, WILLIAM TREBLE	3¾	,,	1900 to 1903, 1904 to 1905.
,, J. C. MORTIMER	3½	,,	1890 to 1894.
,, A. E. HAMPTON	3½	,,	1902 to 1905.
,, W. BULLOCK	3¼	,,	1890 to 1893.
,, R. DUFTY	3¼	,,	1902 to 1905.
,, E. GREY	3¼	,,	1892 to 1893, 1894 to 1895.
,, C. A. POOLE	3	,,	1886 to 1888.
,, T. F. APSEY	2¾	,,	1888 to 1890.
,, S. TOVEY	2¾	,,	1898 to 1900.
,, J. W. TENNEY	2¾	,,	1902 to 1905.
,, S. SHAMBROOK	2½	,,	1883 to 1884, 1886 to 1887.
,, G. ABRAHAM	2½	,,	1882 to 1883, 1884, 1885, 1887 to 1888.
,, A. LLOYD	2½	,,	1902 to 1904.
,, E. GINGELL	2¼	,,	1884 to 1886.
,, J. REED	2¼	,,	1889 to 1890, 1894 to 1895.
,, J. BULTON	2¼	,,	1897 to 1899.
,, B. HOLLINGS	2¼	,,	1897 to 1899.
,, A. T. JOHNS	2¼	,,	1898, 1899 to 1900.
,, W. W. LANE	2	,,	1882, 1885 to 1886, 1889.
,, J. CURLE	2	,,	1902 to 1903, 1904 to 1905.

COMMITTEE-MEN—*continued.*

Mr. I. HUMPHREYS	1¾	years	1883 to 1885.
,, J. HUSSEY	1¾	,,	1887, 1893.
,, G. JAMES	1¾	,,	1903 to 1905.
,, F. LEWIS.....	1½	,,	1883 to 1884.
,, E. EDMUNDS	1½	,,	1886 to 1887.
,, E. RYALL	1½	,,	1896 to 1897.
,, W. HOLLIER.....	1½	,,	1894 to 1895.
,, J. HORNE	1½	,,	1901 to 1902.
,, J. W. DAVIS	1½	,,	1902 to 1904.
,, A. EDGELL.....	1¼	,,	1882, 1883, 1884.
,, H. HARDING.....	1½	,,	1882, 1883, 1884 to 1885.
,, H. KEW	1¼	,,	1882, 1884 to 1885, 1887.
,, O. C. LANE	1¼	,,	1891 to 1892.
,, J. W. SALTER	1¼	,,	1898 to 1899.
,, A. W. STONE	1¼	,,	1899 to 1900.
Mrs. E. GOUGH.....	1¼	,,	1899 to 1900.
Mr. WILLIAM HAZELL	1¼	,,	1901 to 1902.
,, G. H. ROWE	1¼	,,	1901 to 1902.

The following have also served for one year or less:—

Mr. W. MILLARD.
,, A. TREBLE.
,, A. TAYLOR.
,, G. PAYNE.
,, G. PLUMMER.
,, E. K. BAYLIS.
,, G. WORFIELD.
,, J. F. HOPKINS.
,, J. PARTRIDGE.
,, H. LONNEN.
,, W. SAUNDERS.
,, J. COOK.
,, J. BURCHELL.
,, A. BUTLER.
,, W. WEBBER.
,, A. POOLE.
Mr. J. PARFITT.
,, T. M. BOLT.
,, G. STOCK.
,, I. STEEDS.
,, J. HURDITCH.
,, J. HYNAM.
,, W. GOUGH.
,, W. CHAPMAN.
,, W. HARSE.
,, T. COLLINS.
,, S. C. POPE.
,, H. WORLOCK.
,, J. M. BRYAN.
,, H. HARSE.
,, H. POLLARD.
,, D. CLARKE.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

ESTABLISHED 1882.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.					
		Share.	Loans, Including P. Bank Contributions.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.	Building Loans to Members.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Oct., 1882...	...	62	36	...	...	...	98	21	...	...	...	...
April, 1883...	...	100	48	38	...	...	159	36	...	...	...	...
July, 1883...	...	101	32	75	...	...	167	43	...	...	...	...
Oct., 1883...	...	109	70	24	...	...	175	43	...	...	...	...
Jan., 1884...	...	108	107	36	3	...	231	44	...	...	...	...
April, 1884...	...	122	59	15	6	...	184	43	...	...	...	...
July, 1884...	...	123	88	15	12	...	241	41	...	...	...	...
Oct., 1884...	...	161	38	6	12	...	191	39	...	...	...	...
Jan., 1885...	...	191	140	14	13	...	344	55	1	...	...	...
April, 1885...	...	209	149	37	13	...	353	77	6	...	...	...
July, 1885...	...	215	188	12	14	...	391	72	10	...	...	...
Oct., 1885...	...	256	231	23	16	...	386	176	16	...	...	...
Jan., 1886...	...	269	271	79	17	300	462	494	19	...	...	...
April, 1886...	...	293	292	74	18	430	400	713	25	...	...	...
July, 1886...	...	333	338	37	19	680	356	1068	28	...	...	...
Oct., 1886...	...	452	256	99	22	1000	422	1427	30	...	...	...
Jan., 1887...	...	503	363	106	25	1000	399	1617	38	...	19	...
April, 1887...	...	573	395	74	28	1000	466	1648	43	...	25	...
July, 1887...	...	666	334	214	31	1000	544	1733	46	...	36	...
Oct., 1887...	...	811	336	225	34	950	704	1725	54	...	30	...
Jan., 1888...	...	924	319	320	37	950	901	1735	64	...	9	...
April, 1888...	...	1028	295	101	40	900	668	1722	66	...	76	...
July, 1888...	...	1189	236	110	43	800	704	1724	85	...	22	...

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.				
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus to Employees.	Educational Purposes.
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	s. d.	£	£ s. d.
Oct., 1882...	16	245	...	20	0 11 0	1 0	...	...
April, 1883...	30	499	1 0 0	6	1 0 0	0 6	...	...
July, 1883...	25	323	1 0 0	16/–	1 0 0	...	...	...
Oct., 1883...	42	534	1 0 0	12	1 0 0	...	...	...
Jan., 1884...	38	476	1 0 0	18	2 10 0	1 0	...	...
April, 1884...	37	503	1 10 0	21	2 10 0	1 0	...	...
July, 1884...	40	500	2 0 0	37	2 10 0	1 10	...	...
Oct., 1884...	43	528	2 0 0	28	2 0 0	1 10	...	...
Jan., 1885...	43	560	1 10 0	37	3 0 0	1 8	...	...
April, 1885...	44	599	1 0 0	23	4 0 0	1 0	...	...
July, 1885...	44	579	3 0 0	41	4 0 0	1 6	...	...
Oct., 1885...	44	501	5 0 0	46	5 0 0	1 6	...	1 10 0
Jan., 1886...	45	530	5 0 0	23	5 0 0	1 4	...	0 11 3
April, 1886...	42	560	3 0 0	21	5 0 0	1 2	...	0 10 6
July, 1886...	40	515	4 0 0	28	6 0 0	1 3	...	0 13 0
Oct., 1886...	92	1384	6 0 0	74	8 0 0	1 3	...	2 0 0
Jan., 1887...	67	1127	5 0 0	63	10 0 0	1 4	...	1 10 0
April, 1887...	84	1356	5 10 0	80	8 0 0	1 5	...	2 0 0
July, 1887...	122	1872	6 0 0	112	9 0 0	1 4	...	3 0 0
Oct., 1887...	129	2059	8 0 0	138	10 0 0	1 5	...	3 10 0
Jan., 1888...	134	2666	9 0 0	158	11 0 0	1 5	...	5 0 0
April, 1888...	141	2446	13 0 0	181	14 0 0	1 6	...	5 0 0
July, 1888...	139	2382	13 0 0	154	16 0 0	1 5	...	4 0 0

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued*.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	LIABILITIES.					ASSETS.					
		Share.	Loans, Including P. Bank Contributions.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.	Building Loans to Members.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Oct., 1888...	486	1283	231	310	46	700	892	1738	97	...	38	...
Jan., 1889...	520	1373	216	509	49	700	1216	1732	111	...	13	...
April, 1889...	552	1531	206	220	52	500	844	1732	129	...	36	...
July, 1889...	570	1734	370	181	55	300	800	1761	140	...	31	...
Oct., 1889...	592	1828	286	507	58	...	973	1755	158	...	32	...
Jan., 1890...	640	1861	314	715	61	...	1214	1768	172	...	32	...
April, 1890...	662	2167	337	310	64	...	1052	1763	189	...	141	...
July, 1890...	677	2312	265	366	67	...	765	1755	205	...	546	...
Oct., 1890...	717	2483	305	326	70	...	969	1742	224	...	513	...
Jan., 1891...	754	2712	336	332	75	...	1292	1730	244	...	512	...
April, 1891...	812	2929	321	155	85	...	1257	1707	270	...	607	...
July, 1891...	840	3192	335	205	90	...	1079	1715	288	...	1075	...
Oct., 1891...	880	3408	385	123	95	...	1176	1710	308	...	1150	...
Jan., 1892...	935	3617	392	152	105	...	1289	1940	531	...	1080	...
April, 1892...	950	3918	430	285	115	...	1193	1940	367	...	1648	...
July, 1892...	979	4189	418	80	115	...	968	2527	1133	79	476	...
Oct., 1892...	1007	4313	429	160	125	...	1205	2710	898	90	117	437
Jan., 1893...	1040	4405	481	111	130	...	1617	2753	423	64	192	426
April, 1893...	1070	4680	524	88	130	...	1341	2730	461	113	404	808
July, 1893...	1118	4678	548	133	158	...	1306	2690	485	102	527	796
Oct., 1893...	1130	5218	587	98	174	1200	1355	4300	511	110	624	785
Jan., 1894...	1158	5284	543	116	186	1200	1775	4230	531	135	327	773
April, 1894...	1232	5556	571	73	201	2000	1117	5466	550	111	899	750

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.				
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus to Employees.	Educational Purposes.
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Oct., 1888...	147	2620	14 0 0	201	17 0 0	1 6	...	6 0 0
Jan., 1889...	152	2967	15 0 0	227	18 0 0	1 6	...	8 0 0
April, 1889...	161	3159	15 0 0	229	20 0 0	1 6	...	8 0 0
July, 1889...	172	3137	10 0 0	195	22 0 0	1 4	...	...
Oct., 1889...	174	3128	14 0 0	247	22 0 0	1 6	...	8 0 0
Jan., 1890...	177	3194	14 0 0	242	22 0 0	1 6	...	6 0 0
April, 1890...	181	3400	14 0 0	282	22 0 0	1 6	3 0 0	8 0 0
July, 1890...	180	3153	15 0 0	256	22 0 0	1 6	3 0 0	8 0 0
Oct., 1890...	187	3617	15 0 0	243	24 0 0	1 6	3 0 0	8 0 0
Jan., 1891...	193	4101	15 0 0	322	37 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	8 0 0
April, 1891...	205	4398	21 0 0	354	38 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	10 0 0
July, 1891...	215	4307	16 0 0	325	40 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	5 0 0
Oct., 1891...	219	4356	11 0 0	321	42 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	5 0 0
Jan., 1892...	228	4729	27 0 0	354	44 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	10 0 0
April, 1892...	239	4856	30 0 0	386	49 0 0	1 6	5 0 0	10 0 0
July, 1892...	257	4617	38 0 0	359	45 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	10 0 0
Oct., 1892...	263	4892	24 0 0	389	48 0 0	1 6	5 0 0	10 0 0
Jan., 1893...	266	4838	...	316	50 0 0	1 4	4 0 0	3 0 0
April, 1893...	266	4952	36 0 0	420	52 0 0	1 6	4 0 0	10 0 0
July, 1893...	268	4862	41 0 0	379	55 0 0	1 6	5 0 0	15 0 0
Oct., 1893...	269	4505	48 0 0	374	57 0 0	1 6	5 0 0	10 0 0
Jan., 1894...	272	5026	74 0 0	405	60 0 0	1 7	5 0 0	15 0 0
April, 1894...	277	5646	35 0 0	474	63 0 0	1 7	6 0 0	15 0 0

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued.*

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	LIABILITIES.					ASSETS.					
		Share.	Loans, Including P. Bank Contributions.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.	Building Loans to Members.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
July, 1894...	1294	5633	597	29	213	2000	1120	5396	573	109	1056	741
Oct., 1894...	1343	5956	624	68	235	1750	1158	5357	597	124	1236	732
Jan., 1895...	1386	6007	618	110	256	1200	1569	5379	629	95	311	870
April, 1895...	1426	6371	655	105	277	1200	1278	5327	673	144	1101	844
July, 1895...	1490	6721	731	59	297	1200	1000	5682	711	127	1297	1083
Oct., 1895...	1638	6892	767	120	327	550	1478	5742	757	147	449	1064
Jan., 1896...	1735	7214	738	64	347	550	1907	5838	817	184	306	1051
April, 1896...	1824	7723	809	313	432	710	1790	7260	882	234	10	943
July, 1896...	1884	7712	1505	504	474	710	2078	7749	946	278	...	930
Oct., 1896...	1962	8376	818	805	511	710	2368	7932	1000	271	20	915
Jan., 1897...	2040	9112	859	560	532	710	3055	7935	1070	316	16	903
April, 1897...	2173	10059	1000	400	627	710	2676	8521	1158	286	885	815
July, 1897...	2250	10581	1070	200	635	710	2439	9693	1204	360	...	803
Oct., 1897...	2340	10519	1080	1411	597	2385	3363	11201	1267	354	134	1049
Jan., 1898...	2412	10881	1059	897	618	3477	3324	12043	1319	418	155	1281
April, 1898...	2465	11296	1050	1250	630	4070	3705	13028	1226	427	64	1232
July, 1898...	2567	11453	1022	524	676	4993	3743	13252	1226	511	13	1066
Oct., 1898...	2647	11666	1059	585	639	5736	4655	13312	1228	505	185	1148
*Jan., 1899...	...	11933	1000	416	648	7151	4363	13496	1250	553	210	1314
April, 1899...	...	11286	1017	473	68	7222	3643	13293	1250	478	950	1151
July, 1899...	...	10603	945	229	87	7294	3522	13177	1444	477	168	1231
Oct., 1899...	2350	9746	928	2395	60	8823	5183	13108	1254	478	124	1707
Jan., 1900...	2379	9725	886	1874	40	8618	4599	13673	1474	505	233	1636

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.			Profit and How Disposed Of.											
						Net.	Interest on Capital.			Dividend.		Bonus to Employees.			Educational Purposes.		
	£	£	£	s.	d.	£	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
July, 1894...	293	5926	89	0	0	493	64	0	0	1	7	6	0	0	15	0	0
Oct., 1894...	304	5777	81	0	0	535	61	0	0	1	8	7	0	0	15	0	0
Jan., 1895...	334	6448	100	0	0	614	66	0	0	1	9	8	0	0	15	0	0
April, 1895...	353	7046	100	0	0	734	68	0	0	2	0	11	0	0	20	0	0
July, 1895...	380	7212	100	0	0	863	73	0	0	2	0	12	0	0	40	0	0
Oct., 1895...	423	7852	100	0	0	892	75	0	0	2	0	13	0	0	20	0	0
Jan., 1896...	475	9367	100	0	0	1051	77	0	0	2	0	15	0	0	20	0	0
April, 1896...	493	9592	100	0	0	1057	80	0	0	2	0	16	0	0	25	0	0
July, 1896...	540	9594	100	0	0	1008	80	0	0	2	0	16	0	0	25	0	0
Oct., 1896...	615	10427	100	0	0	1174	91	0	0	2	1	17	0	0	25	0	0
Jan., 1897...	683	11797	100	0	0	1334	98	0	0	2	1	20	0	0	25	0	0
April, 1897...	813	13420	100	0	0	1468	117	0	0	2	1	21	0	0	30	0	0
July, 1897...	796	11867	50	0	0	1153	121	0	0	2	0	16	0	0	25	0	0
Oct., 1897...	793	11938	60	0	0	1305	116	0	0	2	0	18	0	0	31	0	0
Jan., 1898...	835	13161	120	0	0	1511	123	0	0	2	0	23	0	0	38	0	0
April, 1898...	922	13523	100	0	0	1342	131	0	0	2	0	18	0	0	29	0	0
July, 1898...	1004	13210	60	0	0	1194	131	0	0	2	0	17	0	0	29	0	0
Oct., 1898...	1042	14102	60	0	0	1327	150	0	0	2	0	20	0	0	34	0	0
*Jan., 1899...	1046	20272	152	0	0	*163	188	0	0	1	9		...			...	
April, 1899...	985	13162	191	0	0	664	129	0	0	1	6	18	0	0	30	0	0
July, 1899...	985	11222	163	0	0	623	120	0	0	1	6	15	0	0	25	0	0
Oct., 1899...	967	11388	167	0	0	744	197	0	0	1	6	13	0	0	22	0	0
Jan., 1900...	938	11807	169	0	0	970	198	0	0	1	8	16	0	0	27	0	0

*Loss—Butchery Loss, £1,564. Assets reinstated, £234. Reserve Fund used up.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BEDMINSTER INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued.*

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.					
		Share.	Loans, Including P. Bank Contributions.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.	Building Loans to Members.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
April, 1900...	2401	9315	1181	1487	41	8702	4351	13519	1255	542	256	1597
July, 1900...	2453	9445	1059	1469	42	8959	4297	13423	1436	594	143	1759
Oct., 1900...	2490	9511	1034	1140	72	8994	4261	13246	1256	612	264	1724
Jan., 1901...	2534	8631	1044	2973	77	9199	5026	13525	1465	674	372	1504
April, 1901...	2547	8506	1214	3369	91	9081	5412	13448	1257	751	554	1454
July, 1901...	2596	8383	1115	3353	92	9139	5177	13605	1462	847	261	1428
Oct., 1901...	2677	8281	1120	3460	99	9196	5154	13526	1260	885	396	1405
Jan., 1902...	2686	8435	1112	4322	25	9137	6025	13457	1478	1029	533	1217
April, 1902...	2718	8375	1322	3537	47	8830	5483	13373	1259	977	381	1187
July, 1902...	2741	8535	1275	2931	57	8613	4421	13014	1428	1003	859	1162
Oct., 1902...	2781	8357	1286	3344	36	8670	4423	13299	1351	987	955	1128
Jan., 1903...	2791	8209	1287	3987	26	8730	5107	13431	1485	1043	766	1081
April, 1903...	2795	8611	1485	3973	97	8536	5222	14147	1253	990	611	1030
July, 1903...	2802	8875	1390	3497	102	8596	4981	14097	1271	918	536	1009
Oct., 1903...	2873	8889	1633	3865	132	8667	5777	14052	1303	801	906	987
Jan., 1904...	2727	8941	1713	3109	170	8729	5527	13992	1317	846	584	967
April, 1904...	2740	9243	1877	3358	217	8463	5640	14329	1303	808	765	933
July, 1904...	2764	9398	2188	2430	225	8529	4985	14257	1318	818	805	939
Oct., 1904...	2819	9150	2303	2108	239	9895	5280	14087	1303	931	448	907
Jan., 1905...	2854	9143	2343	2441	242	8659	5625	13926	1319	951	870	951
April, 1905...	2927	9756	2777	788	383	8637	5579	13850	1303	1160	687	771
July, 1905...	3000	9975	2903	415	414	8302	4865	13776	1319	865	1066	752

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.											
				Net.	Interest on Capital.			Dividend.		Bonus to Employees.			Educational Purposes.		
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
April, 1900...	1000	10807	169 0 0	866	99	0	0	1	8	13	0	0	22	0	0
July, 1900...	1048	10928	172 0 0	791	98	0	0	1	6	13	0	0	22	0	0
Oct., 1900...	1017	11188	172 0 0	819	99	0	0	1	4	12	0	0	21	0	0
Jan., 1901...	1035	11522	180 0 0	763	96	0	0	1	5	11	0	0	19	0	0
April, 1901...	1062	11555	183 0 0	812	91	0	0	1	4	12	0	0	20	0	0
July, 1901...	1074	11535	193 0 0	790	90	0	0	1	4	12	0	0	20	0	0
Oct., 1901...	1015	11550	126 0 0	671	89	0	0	1	3	9	0	0	15	0	0
Jan., 1902...	1025	11817	128 0 0	864	89	0	0	1	4	13	0	0	22	0	0
April, 1902...	1030	11215	126 0 0	712	87	0	0	1	3	10	0	0	16	0	0
July, 1902...	1026	11114	122 0 0	607	88	0	0	1	3	9	0	0	16	0	0
Oct., 1902...	1021	10841	120 0 0	559	89	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	14	0	0
Jan., 1903...	1044	11411	129 0 0	836	88	0	0	1	2	13	0	0	22	0	0
April, 1903...	1049	10936	153 0 0	774	91	0	0	1	2	9	0	0	15	0	0
July, 1903...	1064	10488	164 0 0	751	94	0	0	1	3	10	0	0	17	0	0
Oct., 1903...	1031	10295	161 0 0	853	95	0	0	1	4	11	0	0	19	0	0
Jan., 1904...	1041	11382	160 0 0	906	97	0	0	1	4	13	0	0	21	0	0
April, 1904...	1086	11190	167 0 0	826	99	0	0	1	4	11	0	0	18	0	0
July, 1904...	1134	10833	164 0 0	697	103	0	0	1	3	9	0	0	16	0	0
Oct., 1904...	1152	11766	164 0 0	804	102	0	0	1	3	11	0	0	18	0	0
Jan., 1905...	1050	11107	161 0 0	1129	115	0	0	1	6	17	0	0	28	0	0
April, 1905...	1118	11796	158 0 0	1269	117	0	0	1	7	17	0	0	28	0	0
July, 1905...	1190	11797	160 0 0	1027	130	0	0	1	7	14	0	0	24	0	0



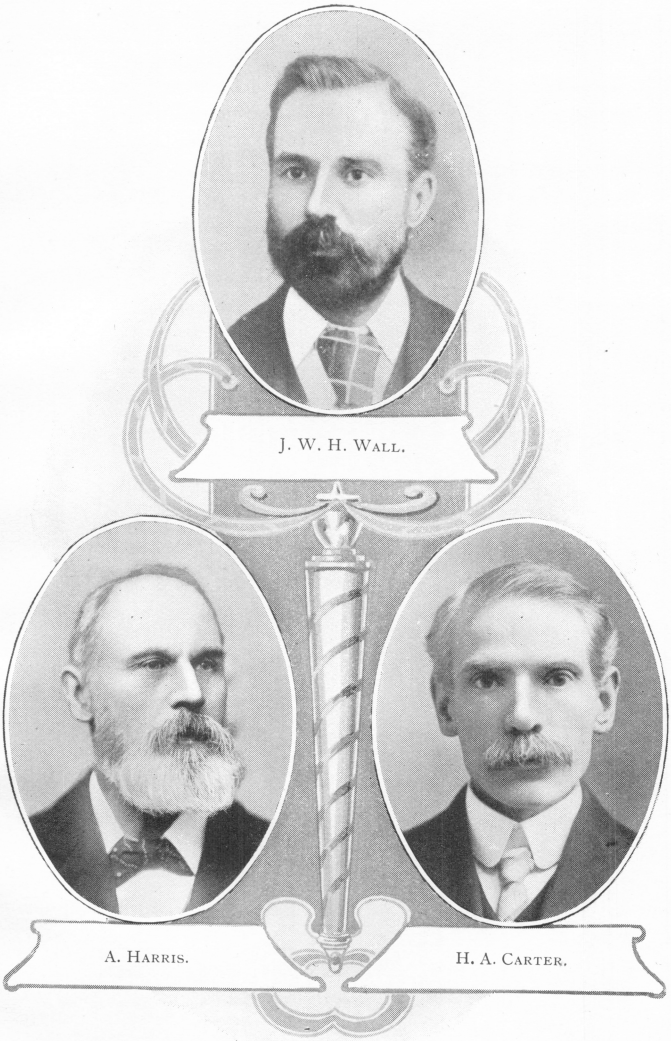
CHAPTER XIV.

The Bristol and District Co-operative Society Limited.

WHAT seems most extraordinary about the start of the Bristol and District Co-operative Society is the fact that the promoters were ignorant that a Co-operative Society already existed at Bedminster; yet, according to one of the pioneers, such was the case. In those days the working classes were practically unorganised in Bristol. Combinations were not favoured; it was not respectable to be a trade unionist; and the workers reaped the harvest of their paltry pride in a splendid isolation and comparative impotence. Not all, however. A Trades Council there was, and some doughty champions of labour were represented there—men who were not only self-respecting, but class-respecting, and who sought to turn their unionism to good account in providing means of education for their fellows. Of the first three Secretaries of the Trades Council, Mr. Tom Thomas, Mr. G. F. Jones, and Mr. J. W. H. Wall—somewhat irreverently termed "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"—the two latter were largely responsible for the commencement of the Bristol and District Co-operative Society. In the first place, however, inspiration came from the Rev. Canon Percival, who, on September 6th, 1883, addressing the Trades Council upon "Some Matters in which Trade Unionists may Help," laid particular emphasis upon Co-operation. The matter was carried forward another stage on February 7th, 1884, when Mr. G. F. Jones contributed a paper upon the subject of Co-operation. Mr. J. W. H. Wall then took up the theme; and, supported by Mr. Alfred Harris, Chairman of the

Council, he suggested that steps should be taken to give a practical turn to the evening's debate, in consequence of which a small company of five assembled at 38, Croydon Street, Easton Road (Mr. Wall's house), on February 26th, 1884. These five were Messrs. Alfred Harris, James White, Henry A. Carter, G. W. Ham, and J. W. H. Wall. There was also present at the meeting Mr. Wilkinson, who had been a pioneer of the old Bristol Industrial and Provident Society, and he gave the enthusiasts some valuable advice, although he did not join with them. Of the five, Mr. Harris is in London, but poorly in health; Mr. Wall is still living in the same house as then, and, despite the ravages of time and many disappointments, is still optimistic as to the ultimate future of Co-operation. He may justly be regarded as the pioneer of the Bristol and District Society, for it was his enthusiasm which fired his colleagues, and his unselfish labours made the start at all possible. Mr. Henry A. Carter is one of the Society's most earnest workers to-day—until recently he was on the Committee, and has served in the capacity both of President and Vice-President; of the other two, Mr. James White has passed away, and Mr. Ham left Bristol some years ago.

After due deliberation these five each agreed to speculate in one shilling's worth of literature, which they obtained from the Co-operative Union, wherewith to start active propaganda. It is evident that their faith was equal to the occasion, for before separating they decided to hold a public meeting at an early date, and to ask the Co-operative Union to send speakers. This was held at the Star Coffee House on Tuesday, March 25th, Mr. Joseph Clay and the Rev. T. G. Gardiner attending from Gloucester and Whitechapel respectively as representatives of the Co-operative Union. The genial warm-heartedness of the former, and the strong moral enthusiasm of the latter, had already made their names household words in the Co-operative movement, and that evening, as the result of their preaching and upon the motion of Mr. H. A. Carter, the Bristol and District Society was launched.

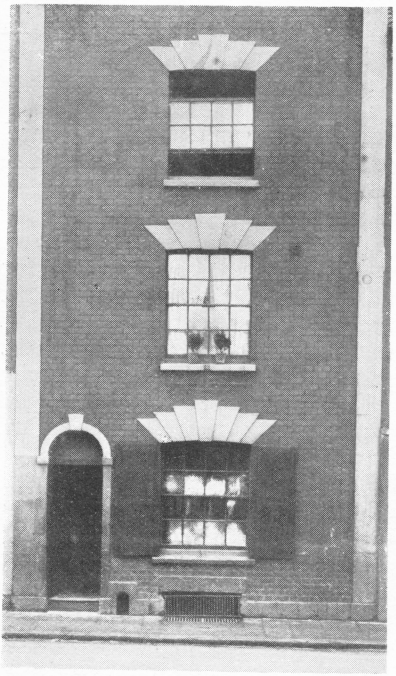


PIONEERS BRISTOL AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

The meeting was attended by about twenty persons, among them being the late Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett, who immediately identified himself with the movement, becoming, as he was proud to say in after years, one of the first members of the Society. Fourteen members were enrolled that evening, each of whom undertook to make the existence of the Society known among their friends and acquaintances. For the time being, Mr. Barnett kindly placed his office at the disposal of the members, and fortnightly meetings to report progress and quicken enthusiasm were held there. The first official General Meeting of members was held at 13, John Street, on June 27th, 1884. It was then decided to proceed with the rules, in the framing of which the services of the Co-operative Union were sought. The officers and Committee were also elected as follows:—President, Mr. Alfred Harris; Treasurer, Mr. W. H. Frank; Secretary, Mr. J. H. Tennear; Committee, Messrs. F. G. Barnett, H. J. Spear, Jas. White, J. D. Marshall, G. Turner, W. Carter, H. A. Carter, and R. Shorney. On September 17th, however, Mr. Tennear resigned the Secretaryship, and a Special Meeting of members on September 29th elected Mr. J. W. H. Wall to fill his place.

Meanwhile the C.W.S. had been making arrangements to open a depôt in Bristol for the convenience of the Societies in the West of England and South Wales, and in October they held a meeting at Colston Hall to celebrate the event. The pioneers of the Bristol and District Society embraced the opportunity for advertisement thus afforded, and arranged a Public Meeting on their own account. As a result some sixteen new members were added to the roll, and it was felt that premises should be obtained in order that they might commence business as soon as possible. Newfoundland Street and Gloucester Road were both regarded as favourable centres, and inquiries were instituted in both districts, but with no result. Eventually a private house was secured in Houlton Street, St. Paul's, and it was agreed to rent this on a yearly tenancy. Thus on November 13th, 1884, with a capital of £40 and 48 members, trading was commenced. In

their spare time the Committee-men fitted up the front room of the ground floor with some rough fixtures, and a small supply of groceries and provisions—nineteen articles in all—was procured from the C.W.S. Depôt in Victoria Street at a cost of £20. The Store was opened for two evenings during the week, and each Committee-man took his turn in serving the goods.



First Premises, Houlton Street, 1884.

The opening of this Store recalls to one's mind that other famous beginning in Toad Lane, Rochdale, so graphically described by the late Mr. G. J. Holyoake in his history of the Rochdale Pioneers.

Houlton Street, Bristol, like Toad Lane, Rochdale, is not in the most aristocratic quarter; and with the Bristol "gude wife," as with those elsewhere, an intrusion of the male element into domestic affairs, save as a recognised expert, is a matter for criticism, if not doubtful hostility. The sight of their neighbours, perhaps their own husbands, decked in shopmen's regimentals was not calculated to fire the enthusiasm of the household chancellors of the exchequer, and they were quite ready to launch their criticisms accordingly. In the course of our story we shall see that they have since amply made up for that elementary caution.

Meanwhile the faithful few did their best to supply in themselves what might be lacking in their friends. Like the immortal Father O'Flynn, each of them set about the task of

> "Tachin the hazy ones,
> Coaxin' unaisy ones,"

and strengthening their own purpose in the process. With a stock of £20 it was scarcely to be expected that more could be done than provide themselves with a few of their wants, but for the first quarter an average weekly trade of £10 was maintained, and the profit permitted of a 1s. 6d. dividend. The expenses, of course, were quite nominal. All the officials worked voluntarily, so there was no labour to pay for, and the waste was at a minimum, for these amateur shopmen bought for their own consumption the pieces of bacon and cheese which remained as testimony to their clumsy efforts to serve their brethren, and they paid full price, too.

For six months the Store was conducted in this manner, at the end of which period it was thought they might venture upon employing a storekeeper and opening the shop all day. The results were so disappointing at the quarter end as to justify the maxim "that if you want a thing done well you must do it yourself." The new man was quickly dispensed with, and the Secretary given sole charge at a nominal salary. The position began to mend almost immediately, and both trade and profit increased.

In March, 1886, the weekly takings were £20, and the Committee were seriously concerned at their weekly meetings as to the new lines to be stocked. Strong in their desire to be practical tradesmen, they attended themselves to the details of purchasing, and samples were obtained wherever possible. The method appears to have been to prepare an order for sundries from the C.W.S., and to institute inquiries from various sources for special quotations for quantities of, say, soap, or some other leading line. It would be interesting to guess what was understood by "quantities" for a trade of £20 per week! Possibly clothes-lines or matches or, perhaps, cake had to be bought, in which case two of the Committee would be told off to procure samples for next Committee night.

Very precise in their arrangements were our friends, nothing should be done out of place. Thus it is recorded that "an order for pocket and small tooth combs must remain over till order night." They were not to be hustled by extraordinary demand, however urgent.

Such transactions may occasion a smile to-day, but to our pioneers they were matters of some moment. Supplies of bread were obtained from a baker who allowed the Society a commission; but it was found that short-weight loaves were being delivered, and, though it is not recorded as to the Society's action with regard to the baker, a minute does appear that in future bread should be sold over the counter by weight. It is clear that the Society had regard to the honesty of its own dealings, whatever might be the practice of others.

As propagandists these pioneers were quite whole-hearted. They fully believed in the principles for which they contended, and were quite sanguine as to the support of their fellows eventually. Notwithstanding that Houlton Street was scarcely paying, they undertook an active campaign in other likely districts. They were sufficiently strong in a determination to succeed to let "I dare not wait on I could," and talked boldly of opening Branches. A public meeting, under the chairmanship of the Rev. T. W. Harvey, a warm supporter of the movement, was held at St. Agnes' in April, 1886, and among the speakers was Mr. Vaughan Nash. This gentleman had considerable influence upon the Society during the few years he was associated with it, more especially in the Educational Department. He was instrumental in bringing some practical support to the movement in the Hotwells district, a meeting of work-people being held in that neighbourhood soon after the St. Agnes' public meeting, which eventually resulted in the Hotwells Branch being formed. At first, among the pioneers, Mr. Nash was not very cordially welcomed. He was viewed with suspicion as representing another class. To use the words of one of the critics:—

> Working men feel a hesitancy in mixing with men of culture and wealth. It was not till continued proof of sympathy had been

shown that these feelings wore off, and Mr. Nash had by his real earnestness and devotion to the cause won the confidence of them all.

Mr. Thos. Foulkes, another of the speakers at St. Agnes', was the Manager of the C.W.S. Depôt, then situate in Victoria Street. He was a blunt, plain man from the North, who had served a long apprenticeship in the movement, and his practical experience was invaluable to these young beginners.

These two meetings created a considerable stir. In the Hotwells district enthusiasm very quickly developed, so much so that at a General Meeting of members held on May 3rd fears were expressed lest the Committee might be too precipitate. Mr. Harris, the Chairman, promised that no final step would be taken unless the members were first consulted, adding significantly that the Committee were looking for a deposit of £40 in shares and a certain promise of trade before considering the question of opening a Branch. Evidently they were sanguine enough themselves, for the balance sheet, dated May 15th, states:—

> We have just held a Social, Tea, and Meeting at St. Agnes', and believe these gatherings are calculated to cement the feeling of brotherhood among our members. We have also held a meeting at the Hotwells, and we are pleased to say a nucleus of a cause has been formed there, which we believe will ultimately result in a Branch Store being established in that district.

At the Quarterly Meeting on June 7th it was announced that Hotwells district had provided £30 share capital from thirty-six members, twenty of whom would be customers; and before another month had passed away the movement was ripe, and it was decided to open a Branch shop. Even then, however, the feeling was not quite unanimous. One voted against the proposition. This type of solitary soul is not infrequent among Co-operators. To such, arguments are a vain appeal; persuasion, worse than useless; whatever they first thought they always think. They pride themselves on their consistency. Should the majority prove to be right, they discreetly subside; but if wrong, with martyr-like submission, they look, if they don't say, "I told you so."

The decision to open at Hotwells was made on June 24th, 1886—a date worth noting, for thereby was inaugurated a policy which has continued to the present day. In order that the new body of members might be adequately represented, two of their number were co-opted by the Committee, their appointment to be confirmed at the following Quarterly Meeting. This procedure showed a splendid disregard of the rules, but was essentially a common-sense arrangement, and for some years to come was responsible for many additions to the Committee. It was also decided to hold General Meetings in each of the two districts alternately. For the week ending August 14th the takings at the Central Store were reported to be £19; No. 1 Branch (Hotwells), £13. 10s. This increase, it was thought, warranted the purchase of 3cwt. of butter for storing purposes, and six cheeses. A record in speculative buying! It was also decided to write our old friend Mr. Clay (Gloucester), asking him to recommend a Branch Manager, also to advertise in the *News*. Although they were but young Co-operators, it is evident by this simple reference to the *News* that the Secretary, at all events, was quite at home in the movement; others less absorbed might have spoken of the "*Co-op. News*," or the "*Co-operative News*." Only the intense Co-operator would use the distinctive and all-embracing term, "The *News*," for it is only such who feel the sense of personal proprietorship of the paper.

Yet it would appear that there was at the time some difference of opinion respecting the Secretary and Manager, for a Monthly Meeting deemed it necessary to record a vote of confidence in Mr. Wall. Such votes are always doubtful compliments, and are calculated to leave a little soreness. Mr. Wall had by no means a light task, and, like many a pioneer, had to suffer little pin-pricks from the ignorance of some, and want of consideration of others. The ultimate success of many Co-operative institutions has largely depended upon the self-sacrificing efforts of first Secretaries, and Bristol was no exception in this respect. No less to be commended

are Secretaries' wives, upon whom a large share of the burden falls, with little or no recognition. The long evenings, and, maybe, the whole of Sunday, when father is shut up in the front room, and must not be disturbed at his books, is among the least of the trials which have to be borne by many a long-suffering Secretary's wife and family. To one who has had experience of this there is nothing remarkable in the fact that on August 11th, 1886, the Registrar was written, asking that, owing to pressure of business, the Society be excused from filling up the annual return. Of course, the request had to be refused, but the circumstance is mentioned to show that the work of a Secretary to a young Society, if taken up with vigour and zest, makes exacting demands, and calls for a large tolerance on the part of those to whom the service is rendered.

A curious incident occurred upon the engagement of the Branch Manager recommended by Mr. Clay, previously referred to. After a settlement had been arrived at with respect to wages and hours, the latter not to exceed 64½ hours per week, and Mr. Weeks (for that was the new man's name) had departed, it was suddenly remembered that nothing had been said about security. In their enthusiasm and inexperience as employers of labour, the Committee had overlooked the one point which affected them as custodians of the members' interests. Obviously they could not raise the question of a £50 bond now, and therefore the matter had to go by default. The man did not prove a success as it was, and the probability is he would have been a worse rather than a better man under a bond, for checks of this kind are powerless to thwart the dishonest, are temptations to deceit to the weak, and are altogether superfluous to the capable and faithful. A young Committee, however, could not be expected to reason out such a matter. To inexperience there always appears to be safety in orthodoxy, and cash bonds are even yet quite usual instruments between employer and employed.

One of the difficulties which face pioneer Committees is that of stocktaking. Simple though the operation

appears to be, the accurate recording of goods in stock calls for the exercise of qualities which every individual is not fortunate enough to possess. A mistake of an apparently trifling character, the addition of a figure, making units into tens, the calculation of singles as dozens, easily possible unless extreme care is brought to the task, may mean the appreciation of one quarter to the serious depreciation of the next. To some small extent the seventh quarterly report suffered thus; and our friends, with instinctive commercialism rather than conscious righteousness, punished the reserve fund and the educational fund in consequence. The matter, however, probably bore good fruit indirectly, by reason of the discussion of this topic at the Quarterly Meeting, in which Messrs. V. Nash, F. G. Barnett, and W. J. Lloyd appear most prominently in support of the upkeep of these funds, one result being that the Educational Committee was strengthened, and it was decided to ask Bedminster Co-operators to co-operate in a programme.

Two other matters of interesting note occurred at this meeting. First, it was resolved to admit members' wives to all the Society's meetings. One feels the subtle influence of the home in this. There can be no doubt that the resolution appealed as much from considerations of tactful expediency as from a sense of justice. It is, however, the first appearance of the fair sex upon the scene; and, knowing the excellent work they have done ever since, to some extent we can say of the framers of this resolution that "they builded better than they knew." Another feature at this meeting was the advocacy on the part of one member of the claims of the *Co-operative News*, and as a result the decision to present a copy weekly to the Bristol Workmen's Institute in Hotwells. The value of Co-operative literature is apt to be too lightly esteemed in these our days of prosperity, but as an aid to propaganda and the crystallisation of ideals there is no more powerful agency than the press, and the pioneers had the good sense to appreciate the fact.

Under the energetic Secretaryship of Mr. V. Nash, the educational work proceeded during the following winter

to be more or less of an intensive kind. What might be termed the humanities of the movement were propagated by means of lectures and public meetings.

A significant resolution appears to have been accepted shortly after the start of the first Branch, that

> Provided any district can guarantee fifty purchasers, two-thirds of whom must be members, a Branch Store may be opened by decision of the members.

As soon as the success at Hotwells had silenced the critics, under the direction of Mr. W. J. Lloyd, the railway men living in the Barton Hill district began to organise for a Branch. Meetings of a more or less informal character were held; and, on November 23rd, the Committee admitted forty-seven new members, amongst whom forty-three were from Barton Hill district. The principle of combination is natural enough to the average railway servant. Scarcely an operation which he performs during the day but implies a direct co-operation with his fellows. In all the principal centres of railway activity, large and, generally speaking, flourishing Co-operative Societies have reared themselves.

The Barton Hill contingent soon made their presence felt in the Bristol and District Society. Sales increased rapidly, and the services of the Secretary's wife had to be requisitioned in the shop during the week, some of the Committee helping on Saturdays. Suggestions were made, in order to cope with the trade brought by these new members, that Houlton Street should be abandoned, and more central premises procured near Lawrence Hill. The promoters of the Barton Hill movement, however, unanimously agreed that this would be unfair to the old members in the St. Paul's district. Consequently, preparations were made for opening a Branch at Barton Hill, or in the immediate neighbourhood.

Then, perhaps, for the first time, the Bristol Co-operators discovered what many other bodies of young Co-operators have found since, that there are certain unscrupulous traders in most communities who will stoop to petty meannesses in order to thwart or harass the promoters of the movement. The incident to which

reference is made, as it afterwards proved, was a blessing in disguise; for, not only did it teach our friends the wisdom of completing their negotiations before making them public, but the unfriendly action of the trader actually saved the Society from entering into what might have proved a bad bargain.

When it was found that the members from Barton Hill were coming in so rapidly, a small Committee was formed to look for suitable premises in the neighbourhood of Lawrence Hill. A shop was found, and a verbal agreement entered into with the landlord to become tenants at a rental of £45 per year. A Special General Meeting of members was convened, and it was all but decided to accept the offer. This was on the Saturday evening; and, though the landlord's offer had been made subject to a reply on Monday, on that day it was being freely rumoured that a grocer had taken the shop to prevent the Society from getting it. A deputation was sent to investigate, and were met in a very high-handed manner by the landlord's son, who indicated that better terms had been obtained, and the following day a letter was received from the landlord himself that he had let the shop. That meant that a little extra patience had to be exercised by the Barton Hill members, and it is only fair to say they exercised this virtue well. In February, 1887, premises were found—a house and shop, with cellarage, bakehouse, and a back entrance—at 184, Lawrence Hill, for the rental of £28. These premises were taken.

From this point sales steadily continued to advance, until by the end of the month they were averaging over £90 per week. Active opposition now began to show itself among the traders. There are three stages which most Societies have to pass through in respect to the private trader: first, ridicule, and possibly contempt; second, opposition, and possibly spitefulness; last, resignation, and tolerable respect. The first stage was already passed. The Bristol Co-operators were not to be laughed out of their project. The attempt to make merry at their expense only revealed to others the sterling quality of

the movement and its supporters, and the enterprise was now assuming an importance which no ridicule or specious argument could displace. The next move was to enter into cutthroat competition, adopt ruses to capture the haphazard Co-operator, and so damage the prestige of the Store. A common device is that of giving a bonus upon purchases made. This is the tit for tat style, and hurts no one but the poor deluded trader, who thereby advertises that his previous charges were excessive. It is no part of the Co-operative programme to enter into competitive warfare with the trader. Honesty in trade is a cardinal Co-operative virtue, and all such attempts as these to decry the Store are doomed to failure. Co-operators are wisely led when they refuse to be influenced by them. Young Committees are naturally nervous when they find themselves the object of special attention on the part of traders, and it indicates some such feeling in Bristol at this time to find recorded—

> That the Committee are of opinion it is indiscreet to mark prices of goods in the window, as it leads tradesmen to copy and undersell us.

This was in March, 1887. The Society had perforce to be content with similar goods to those stocked by the average trader. There would have been but little to distinguish a Co-operative from any other shop window in those days. Twenty years later the Stores are proud to lead the way, tastily setting out their own goods in magnificent profusion, that all and sundry may have practical demonstration of the tangible benefits of Co-operation.

For the first eighteen months the Committee themselves gave all orders for goods, a literal interpretation of the rules quite excusable when it is realised that they had no other means of gaining experience. The time came, however, when the business was likely to suffer through delaying the orders for goods required till Committee night. The sale of many household commodities is very irregular. It is at all times difficult to anticipate with accuracy the probable quantity necessary for a period, and the matter is more complicated when

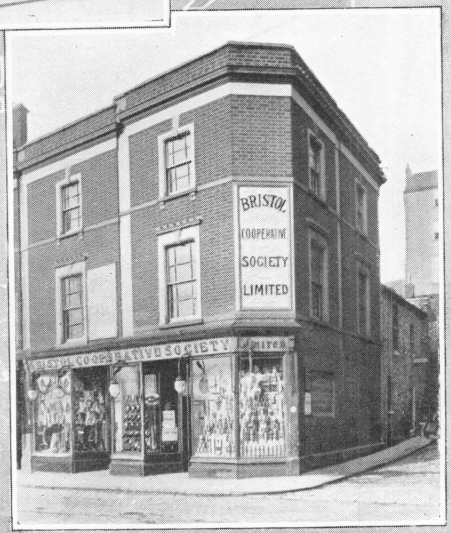
money is scarce and requirements diverse. To obviate the difficulty which arose therefrom the Secretary was given power to order goods, but not to open fresh accounts or procure new lines without the Committee's sanction. Thus the pioneers sought to protect themselves and their servants against the glib tongue of the commercial traveller. Another very wise arrangement made was that of transferring excess stock from Store to Store, so that there might be the quickest returns for outlay.

Thus far the Society had, in spite of difficulties, made progress both in membership and trade. Their enemies had not been of their own household, at any rate, and in consequence their darts had been powerless to injure, much less to destroy. The fire of adversity was at hand, however, and it was all the more trying and bitter when it came that their own inexperience and trustfulness had contributed in a sense to provide the fuel. That must be left for another chapter.



ST. GEORGE'S ROAD BRANCH, 1891.





ST. GEORGE'S ROAD BRANCH, 1909

CHAPTER XV.

THE quarter following the opening of Lawrence Hill Branch, although most satisfactory from a trade standpoint, was very disappointing in respect to profit, in consequence of which the dividend had to be reduced from 1s. 3d. to 1od. It was quite reasonable to account for this by increased expenses consequent upon opening the new Branch. The next quarter still kept up a fair average in respect to sales, but the audit showed that a loss of £54 had been incurred, which is explained in the quarterly report dated August 17th, 1887, as follows:—

The profit made at St. George's Road would have enabled the Committee to pay a dividend of 2s. in the £, as the gross profit on the trade done there amounted to 20 per cent, but this is swallowed up in the loss at Lawrence Hill, notwithstanding the large trade done there at about the same or a less proportionate cost. A chartered accountant was called in, and he quickly diagnosed the complaint, the result being that the Storekeeper was arrested on the charge of stealing the Society's goods.

In due course this man was convicted by the magistrates, but the effects of his pilfering made themselves felt for yet another quarter. Luckily the members held well together, and in the twelfth report the Committee indicated in two-fold manner their unabated confidence in the real strength of the Society. First, in respect to the further small loss showed, they said—

It has been suggested that the value of the premises at Newfoundland Road has so increased owing to the judicious improvements effected there, and the favourable terms upon which the lease has been granted, that the valuation of the fixed stock might reasonably be increased so as to balance the loss on the last quarter. This course your Committee do not advise. They do recommend, however, that the reserve fund be utilised in clearing off the balance.

Then they went on to say—

> Your Committee have received during the past few weeks the strongest proofs of consideration and sympathy from the Bedminster Society. At their last Quarterly Meeting the members voted the sum of £5 as an expression of sympathy and a contribution towards the loss our Society has sustained.

The Committee were very grateful for the expressions of sympathy, but they felt they would be best considering the future interests of the Society by declining the offer. The Co-operative motto is "Self-help." One cannot but admire the Spartan spirit of these resolute Co-operators, a few of whom, by the way, are still with us; but it savours a little of unkindness to refuse an offer so spontaneously and freely made.

Meanwhile, Houlton Street had been fast becoming congested, and there was a call for more accommodation. It was felt that Newfoundland Road would be a good situation for a Store, and discreet inquiries were set on foot, in connection with which it is interesting to note that Canon Percival was written to about a shop in St. Nicholas Road, St. Paul's. But eventually premises were taken at 189, Newfoundland Road, on a lease, and the Registered Office and Central Store were transferred there from Houlton Street. This took place in July, 1887, or just prior to the difficulties at Lawrence Hill. At this time Mr. Wall, who had been serving the Society in the dual capacity as Secretary and Manager, resigned from the official position, though he remained for some years a Committee-man or Auditor. When, in 1893, the movement held the Annual Congress in Bristol, it was felt that the task of writing a short account of the Society's history could not be in better hands than his; and it needs but to say that, except for the faithfulness with which he performed the duty, this present history could not have been nearly so complete as to the early experiences of the Society, for many of the official records have entirely disappeared. Until the election of Mr. T. H. Smith in June, 1890, three appointments to the Secretaryship were made. Following Mr. Wall there was Mr. J. D. Griffith, than whom no one worked with more zeal and energy

for the Society. A schoolmaster, with high and noble ideals, he endeavoured at all times to lead the members towards those things which were practical without being unbrotherly. Even after yielding up the Secretary's position in 1889 he remained on the Committee, and for a time edited the "Wheatsheaf," finally severing his official connection owing to the pressure of his scholastic duties, added to domestic worries and failing health. Mr. Griffith was always listened to with attentive respect at the quarterly and other meetings of the Society, the members accepting his homely advice with a patience they would yield to no other, because they knew the honesty of purpose which lay below the spoken word.

Next in succession to this post came Mr. Ralph Blake who only held the office six months, when he left Bristol to take up a ministry at Gravesend. He left with the good wishes of all the members, who, at the Quarterly Meeting in March, 1890, had the pleasure of hearing read a letter from their late Secretary, in which he exhorted them to uphold the true principles of Co-operation.

Two gentlemen were then approached by the Committee to fill the vacant post—Mr. W. J. Petherick, at that time one of the Auditors, but who could not see his way to accept, and Mr. Hewitt, who did, but after three months' trial found the work too exacting and resigned. On June 25th, 1890, Mr. T. H. Smith was appointed, first as a part time, later as a permanent Secretary, in which capacity he has continued to act till the present day; and it is not too much to say that his zealous and faithful services have done much to place Co-operation upon a firm foundation in Bristol.

To return to our narrative, it was scarcely to be expected that the weakness revealed thus publicly in the management of Lawrence Hill would not have some effect upon the rate of progress; still, a glance at the statistics for the period under review does not show any falling off in trade, but, on the contrary, a gradual increase. The pace was slow, too slow for some of the go-ahead spirits at the helm, and a policy was entered upon in 1888 which has been a matter for more or less anxiety ever since.

The civic responsibilities of English life are closely associated with the ownership of property. In matters of national, municipal, and even social import the possession of property secures privileges for the possessor often in proportion to the quantity possessed. The importance of an individual in the social cosmos is not estimated by standards of quality, but by standards of quantity; and expressed, not in terms of character, but in terms of goods and chattels. However much as we may decry this absurdity the fact remains the same, and the working classes are quite as susceptible to its influence as are other classes. To most of us there is a peculiar charm in being able to speak of *our* property. It was to this tendency that the more ardent leaders of the Society succumbed.

The Eleventh Quarterly Report announces that an eligible site for building had been purchased at Lawrence Hill. This was followed shortly afterwards by the purchase of property in Deanery Road, whereat the St. George's Road Branch had been housed; and, later still, by the purchase of Newfoundland Road building. Within the space of two and a half years over £4,000 was spent on property, notwithstanding that trade was practically at a standstill. This must have been a very anxious and trying period for the Committee. Withal they seem to have been possessed of an unbounded optimism, or, perhaps, we might say with more reason, of a kind of fatalistic belief that somehow or other the Store would muddle through; and with the confidence which comes of great hope they freighted their little bark regardless of the storm clouds which hovered around. Perhaps they were ignorant of the portents. At best, they were but inexperienced mariners on the sea of commerce. It is little short of marvellous that there was no serious disaster; but looking back upon those times one is tempted to question the wisdom of their speculations. It is certain that they started a train of circumstances which led to much personal feeling, and they were ultimately responsible for large and frequent expenditure for alterations, the effects of which were to weaken the Society's financial status considerably. Later on we shall see that,

in order to escape the embarrassment of an increasing burden of expenditure upon buildings, the Committee were led to institute a system of suspending charges from one quarter to another, somewhat ingeniously disguised from the members under the title of an alteration account.

Meanwhile, in the February of that year, the Society had lost the services of their respected President, Mr. Alfred Harris, through his removal to London. It will



Old Lawrence Hill Stores, 1889.

be remembered that Mr. Harris was one of the five pioneers of the Society, at that time being President of the Bristol Trades Council.

He was a man of cool judgment and excellent temper, and well respected by the workers and others interested in social reform in Bristol. His guidance was withdrawn at a critical period in the Society's career; and, although far more enterprising, it soon became evident that his successor did not possess that caution which was a

feature of Mr. Harris' administration. The Committee, in referring to his departure, expressed their appreciation and regret in the following terms:—

> Your Committee are sorry to report that Mr. Harris, the President, who will shortly remove to London, will thus be compelled to sever his connection with this Society. From its initial stages he has laboured for its good, and your Committee feel that we shall yet reap a rich harvest from the good seed which he has so zealously and unselfishly sown.

The erection of premises upon the site purchased at Lawrence Hill was proceeded with forthwith, and on June 24th, 1889, they were opened by Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett in the presence of an enthusiastic crowd of Co-operators.

These premises were situate on the site of some old houses pulled down by the sanitary authorities for street improvements. They had a corner position, and, at this period, a frontage to Lawrence Hill of about 45 feet, and to Leadhouse Lane of 96 feet. The premises comprised two shops, a bakehouse—described at the time as " large " —two ovens, cellars, stabling, vanhouse, flour lofts, stores, and a large room for meetings and other purposes capable of holding 250 persons. One storey in height, they had been erected from designs prepared by Mr. H. Williams, under the superintendence of Messrs. A. and G. Tambling.

Towards the close of 1889 the Committee were concerning themselves seriously about accounts owing from members. The Secretary was instructed to go through these accounts and, where possible, deduct the amount owing from share capital, otherwise to institute proceedings. Such methods, of course, are perfectly just, but not always expedient, particularly the latter drastic step. Apart from the incongruity of working men and women appearing against one another in such a connection, it is degrading a great movement to the level of a huckster's shop. The necessity for such action should never be permitted to arise. Co-operation is a thrift movement and a self-help institution. It should save people from debt and not help them into it. It is the pressure of competitive considerations—not Co-operative ones—

which induces Committees to open accounts with their members, and these are bound to be followed by supplementary regulations more or less harsh in character. Young Co-operative Committees, in their keen desire for trade in large quantities, are apt to under-estimate the commercial value attaching to *quality* of trade. Thus it is that un-Co-operative practices such as credit trading are woven into the fabric during the early stages of a Society's existence, which, in after years, though utterly condemned by experience, are very difficult to dislodge.

According to a minute of November 27th, 1889, Miss Cole was permitted the use of the Committee-room together with fire and light. In this humble way was started the Women's Guild, a movement of sufficient importance to claim special reference in another part of this book.

At the Twentieth Quarterly Meeting, held on December 21st, 1889, there occurred an incident which, though small in itself, indicated the calibre of the members at that period. The quarter had been a poor one, and there was a loss at Newfoundland Road. Additional expenses had been incurred for the opening of Lawrence Hill Stores, of which the Committee decided to add £12. 2s. 8d. to the assets of the Society in the capital account. The Auditors very properly objected, and the matter being thus brought before the members it was decided to make a separate account, with the definite understanding that it should be wiped out within twelve months. It would have been well for the Society if the same precautions had been taken upon similar occasions in later years, but of that more anon. Working men are not credited with having even an ordinary capacity for business, especially in matters of finance, but this incident is sufficient to show that till then the commercial instincts of Bristol and District Co-operators were sound enough, notwithstanding their limited experience.

One very pleasing feature in the early records is the frequent acknowledgments which were made for the services of any who had extended a helping hand. At one

time, it is a retiring Committee-man; at another, some friend of the movement is leaving Bristol. Perhaps an employé is leaving the Society, or maybe death has claimed a co-worker. Whatever it may be, there is the word of good cheer or sympathy as the occasion demands, the hearty feeling of *camaraderie* which is evidence of the essence of true Co-operation. On one occasion the Manager's wife was taken seriously ill, and the poor fellow was at his "wits' end" for ready cash. The Committee came to his aid with a temporary loan and helped him to tide over the evil day. The principle of Co-operation in industry fosters these qualities, and makes people realise in truth that we are "brithers a' for a' that." Moreover, opportunity is always at hand for a practical expression of the sentiment, and to this abundant evidences testify during those early days.



NEWFOUNDLAND ROAD BRANCH, 1886.





NEWFOUNDLAND ROAD BRANCH, 1909.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE balance sheet now presented completes the history of the Society for the first five years. They have been years of anxiety and struggle; there have been times when the boldest have felt qualms of fear, and the most hopeful have had their faith severely tested. But this time has passed away; the trials have proved the inherent strength of the principle, and we can well believe that a Society which has safely passed through such vicissitudes has a glorious future before it. The day of small things has gone; our motto for the future must be Consolidation and Extension. Bristol offers a grand field for Co-operation, and loyalty on the part of the members, combined with efficiency in the management, will secure magnificent results.

Thus, in December, 1889, in somewhat optimistic strain, the Society faced a period of doubt and difficulty.

Trade did not boom ; new members came but slowly; the finances were severely strained to meet heavy liabilities in the shape of mortgages; and, in addition to everything else, there was trouble with employés.

No wonder members were critical. That uneasiness was felt is evidenced by the close scrutiny to which they subjected the doings of the Committee, at Quarterly Meetings.

Again a dishonest employé had to be dealt with, this time at Newfoundland Road. For some time the affairs of the Branch had been more or less unsatisfactory; profits had been low, and complaints numerous. The quarter ending December, 1889, had shown a loss which no one had been able to explain satisfactorily, and a deficit was wiped out by voluntary contributions in the shape of fines upon share capital. Six months later it was discovered that the Manager there had been embezzling the Society's money. Attempting to cover his defalcations, he filled tea chests with bricks and mortar, taking them into stock as so many chests of tea.

He was prosecuted, and at the hearing it transpired that he had been gambling and associating himself with loose characters. It was estimated that through him the Society lost upwards of £50.

For three years, that is from 1890 to 1893, the Society was practically marking time. Profits were falling during the whole period, attributed at one time to dearness of flour, at another to increased expenses of depreciation and excessive competition. Members were critical, and the Committee anxious. Appeals were made for more capital, and every effort was directed towards an economy in working expenses. New departments were opened with a view to capturing more trade and profits. In August, 1890, Boots and Drapery, and later a Boot Repairing Department, were started, but for a time these departments only added to the responsibilities, and did nothing to bring relief.

It is extremely probable that to some extent the very measures taken to economise had a contrary effect on the whole. That things were not working quite smoothly with the employés is very evident, for in December, 1890, the Manager came before the Committee asking whether they had confidence in him, even going so far as to place his resignation in their hands, but at their request he withdrew it again. In a Monthly Meeting a member criticised the Committee for adopting a cheeseparing policy, saying that—

> Co-operation was not only a unity to protect and keep up trade, but also in like manner to pay fair wages, to get good men, who were always better than second-hand ones.

This member, it is true, did not unburden himself with the clearness of a Jeremy Bentham; but it is abundantly clear that in their desire to show satisfactory progress the Committee were faltering in their Co-operative outlook. They were losing hold of the "ideal" in their endeavour to be what they considered "practical." Such a course inevitably spells disaster to Co-operative enterprise, especially when difficulties have to be faced. At such times there is, more than ever, need of strong Co-operative

faith, and, if the Committee waver in their attitude towards what is sometimes slightingly referred to as merely the sentimental aspects of Co-operation, a number of those members who are interested in the movement for reform's sake will become alienated. Disappointed hopes foster indifference, and Co-operation cannot thrive upon indifference. There is always a large proportion of Co-operative members not wholly and solely Co-operators, who are interested in this reform as they are in every reform which seems to promise more equitable social conditions. They are sufficiently educated to be more than mere dividend hunters, but not enough to make them realise that the Store is what they, and not the Committee, like to make it. Once such members feel that the aim of the Store is not so much to render social service as to make profit, their vital interest drops; to them the Store has become a shop. The moral support afforded by this class of individual goes far to ensure success. Without them, the few real enthusiasts are almost powerless against the reactionary tendencies of the bargain hunters, who are attracted to the Store merely for purposes of gain.

Something of this kind was operating just then. Attendances at meetings were scanty. At what should have been a Monthly Meeting the minutes could not be confirmed, as no one was present. Committee-men were conspicuous by their absence from meetings; the few members who did attend the business meetings were especially critical; searching questions were put concerning hours, wages, and conditions generally of the employés. Letters and deputations were received from the Bakers' Union *re* hours and wages of bakers, resulting eventually in a modification of hours. The Secretary of the Trades Council wrote pointing out that for printing its balance sheets the Society were using a non-union house, which procedure, in spite of the Committee, was over-ruled by the members in Quarterly Meeting in March, 1893, after a controversy lasting nearly two years. Added to these disturbing factors, there is every indication that the internal management was in the hands

of weak officials. Quarter after quarter no explanation was forthcoming for leakages, and it was certainly not to the credit of the official element that the Newfoundland Road embezzlement was brought to light. Altogether there appears to have been, during the period under review, laxity in business arrangements, and degeneration in Co-operative ideals. To use the words of a competent observer—

> It appeared to be just one of those times when it would have required little in the shape of adversity to have sent them going in the wrong direction.

Educational enthusiasts there were just a few, but they were like voices crying in the wilderness; the Educational Committee itself had succumbed to an attack of "sleeping sickness," dying apparently without a struggle. The women of the Guild were meeting together, and doubtless did something to keep the flag flying; but they, too, evidently had had their differences, for, in November, 1891, an appeal was made to members' wives to join, "as the Guild had been started on a fresh basis."

In June, 1892, the Auditors called attention to the position of the Society, the paucity of its reserve fund, the heavy expenses, and the looseness of its internal management, as evidenced by faulty stocktaking and a debt list which was growing. The profit at Lawrence Hill was considerably under the average, and the Manager (Mr. Morris) again tendered his resignation, this time to have it accepted. When they next met, an animated discussion ensued as to what should be the Committee's attitude towards the new man when he came, and it was generally felt that they, and not the Manager, should be the masters of the situation. The dominant note was concerned with buying—they must know and do more in this respect; the result being that a Sub-Committee was formed, two of whom should form a quorum. They were to be called the "Grocery Sub-Committee," and have supervision over this important matter of purchasing goods.

The gentleman who was appointed to the position of Manager, Mr. Newton E. Smith, commenced his duties in

August, 1892; and, during the five years he was with the Society, the business was thoroughly systematised and prospered exceedingly. A remarkable tribute to his capacity is shown in the fact that four months after his appearance on the scene the Grocery Sub-Committee was disbanded, on the plea that "it was imprudent to dictate to a capable Manager on matters upon which he had experience and wider knowledge." Our friends were evidently still under the delusion that management consisted of buying, and, that being so, they came to a wise decision. From that point of view a Sub-Committee could hamper, but would hardly be likely to help. Buying requires judgment and tact, but, above all, prompt decision. Qualities such as these are not determined by majority votes, but by individual experience and knowledge. Had the Committee-men had a little more Co-operative experience, however, it might have occurred to them that there was still scope for their energies and keen supervision in determining the policy which should govern the purchase of goods; that they should make themselves acquainted with the sources of supply, the conditions under which goods were produced; that nothing should be offered for sale in the Store which in any way offended their ideals as honest traders. It is not suggested that any such goods were sold, but these considerations should have undoubtedly been the primary concern of the Sub-Committee, and would have fully justified its existence; but it did not occur to them, and so, like sensible men, they retired from a position which was untenable.

With the advent of the new Manager, steps were taken to ascertain with some degree of definiteness how far each department was justifying its existence; and one weak spot, at any rate, was soon found in the Boot Repairing Department. So, in order to keep closer supervision on this department, it was agreed to take stock and balance a profit and loss account weekly.

Another practical step taken was that of preparing a list of purchasing and non-purchasing members, and

each of the Storekeepers was instructed to get into touch with the backsliders.

It is significant to note that references to complaints and irregularities disappear from official records almost immediately upon the change of management, and insensibly the Society began to improve its position. The Congress of 1893, held in Bristol, was instrumental in fanning the smouldering embers into flames. A new enthusiasm manifested itself, and, the immediate necessity of the Store being more trade, methods of propaganda, of a kind calculated to attract customers to the Store, were instituted.

In addition to the investigations before referred to, the whole business was reorganised. Originality in methods, economy and efficiency in distribution, are essential considerations for the success of any business. To demonstrate its capabilities in these respects was, without doubt, a first necessity for the Store just then, and the new Manager was quick to set about it.

One of the ingenious methods adopted was that of familiarising the Society in the minds of the public by utilising a catchy pseudonym. "B. and D.," a euphonic and easily remembered title, was coined, and, needless to say, it caught on. Like those other three letters, C.W.S., so well known to Co-operators in general, the brand "B. and D." upon an article speedily became a household recommendation in Bristol.

Once more the accounts owing by members obtruded themselves. It is a truism that if you wish to alienate a friend you should lend him money; the same is true in connection with storekeeping. Credit customers are altogether undesirable customers to the Store. In times of prosperity they hinder progress, for they cause additional expense; and in times of adversity, when it becomes necessary to conserve the finances, they abandon both Store and debt, congratulating themselves that their capital at least is safe, and perhaps a bit over. Still, the question has to be faced by the management; and, on the principle that an open enemy is better than a false friend,

it may be deemed politic to quit themselves altogether of these questionable friends. This was the view taken then, and President, Secretary, and Manager were accordingly deputed to compare members' debts with their share holding, and, where possible, clear the former by an appropriation of the latter. In these and other ways the efforts of officials were directed towards dealing with internal shortcomings; and, although trade did not move very rapidly forward, the congratulatory tone of successive Quarterly Meetings was proof conclusive that more confidence was felt in the management.

Simultaneously with this remodelling of internals an aggressive propaganda was carried on. Attempts were made to bring the Trade Unionist and the Co-operator together. The late Mr. Gilmore Barnett had a great hand in this movement. His knowledge of both sections, his sympathy with the ideals of labour, quite naturally led him to use his influence to bring the two bodies into closer contact. Quietly but persistently a stronger feeling of brotherliness was permeating the exponents of these two wings of the industrial army. Correspondence columns of newspapers were frequently utilised for discussing supposed differences, all to the ultimate good of each set of disputants. The pen and ink warfare was sometimes embittered, particularly just after the Congress of 1893. Taking the tide at the flood, the Committee, during the winter of that year, sent deputations to several local trade union meetings, including the tailors, carpenters and joiners, lithographic printers, bakers, lath-renders, iron-founders, and wood sawyers. Although the membership increased but slowly, there can be no doubt that these visits did much to spread a better knowledge of the Society's affairs among the workers.

Meanwhile the old Educational Committee was stirred into some show of enthusiasm, and, further, the members at each Branch were encouraged, by the allocation of small grants, to form Social Committees, whose business it was to arrange concerts and meetings of a propagandist character. The whole of 1894 was a boom year in point

of trade and profits, and it was during that year that the policy foreshadowed in the foregoing remarks crystallised into integral parts of the Society's machinery.

The quarter ending February, 1894, in many respects the most successful yet experienced, showed a very substantial profit over any preceding quarter, and permitted of an increase in dividend from 1s. to 1s. 1d. All sections were gratified, naturally so, at these results of their labours, and a general meeting of Social Committees was accordingly arranged for mutual congratulations and encouragement.

Mr. Smith (Manager) had meanwhile been exercising his brain as to how these Social Committees might be turned to still more account, and, at the meeting referred to, he offered to write and read a paper at a conference of members, in which he would propound a scheme for more effective use of the Society's educational funds. This conference was held at the Newfoundland Road Store; and, as a result, Educational and Propaganda Councils were formed in connection with each Store district, with the two-fold object, first, of arousing further enthusiasm among existing members, and, secondly, with a view to increasing the membership in the immediate vicinity of each Store. The method of working is described in detail elsewhere, so there is no need to enter into that here; suffice it to say that the institution of this system had, and still has, a marvellous effect upon the vitality of the Store, and, perhaps more than any other influence, has been responsible for continued commercial prosperity down to the present time. As an instance of the useful work which they initiated at this time, but which seems to have fallen into disuse, at Newfoundland Road the Council undertook to issue new members' pass books, and to keep a careful register of all members enrolled in their district, fulfilling, in some measure, the injunction which the late Mr. G. J. Holyoake so often enjoined upon Societies, that there should be intelligent propaganda among new recruits, in order that intelligent Co-operators might be produced. This Council further suggested the

issue of a prospectus setting forth the advantages of joining the Society, which recommendation was immediately adopted.

The effects of changes in organisation cannot be estimated by immediate results. One of the strongest recommendations of the Co-operative reform is its deliberate adaptation of means to ends, and its method of procedure upon the lines of the least resistance; it advocates no violent cataclysm, but a steady and gradual application of the new spirit which is to supersede that which is old and effete. This ideal can be observed throughout the life's history of most Stores, so that in order accurately to estimate progress achieved we must review the position when each change of policy has had time to establish itself. From 1893 the Bristol and District Co-operative Society became charged with a conscious spirit of reform which has never been allowed to slumber.

BRANCH STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profit.
	£	£	£
Lawrence Hill Branch Grocery and Provision Dept.—			
1888 (3 Quarters)	1336	131	29
1889	2932	227	137
1890	4066	345	257
1891	4041	323	156
1892	3775	305	102
1893 (3 Quarters)	3136	292	90
1894	4172	398	256
1895	4829	436	370
1896	6655	510	493
1897	7615	643	545
1898	10320	905	825
1899	12869	1185	1207
1900	10309	950	976
1901	11603	1075	1036
1902	13376	1321	1200
1903	13306	1263	1297
1904	13538	1273	1514
1905	9998	997	1012

BRANCH STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Houlton Street and Newfoundland Road Branches—	£	£	£
1885	775	81	56
1886	1365	124	92
1887	4312	436	40
1888	947	118	51
1889	1279	117	17
1890	1432	117	91
1891	2021	166	81
1892	2319	198	122
1893 (3 quarters)	2284	173	132
1894	3005	262	166
1895	3448	299	296
1896	4212	336	283
1897	5065	400	377
1898	5484	452	504
1899	6538	604	634
1900	7018	620	652
1901	7124	646	680
1902	6350	554	593
1903	5137	485	433
1904	5796	622	608
1905 (3 Quarters)	4672	508	403
St. George's Road Branch—			
1886	...	...	...
1887	...	...	...
1888	...	...	...
1889	1447	129	65
1890	1751	145	117
1891	1922	159	97
1892	1926	171	95
1893 (3 quarters)	1676	128	111
1894	2753	230	206
1895	3194	273	242
1896	3923	329	338
1897	3722	335	298
1898	4227	385	379
1899	4781	491	423
1900	5029	510	350
1901	4636	512	249
1902	5405	519	420
1903	5858	557	473
1904	6833	701	673
1905 (3 Quarters)	5384	601	464

DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

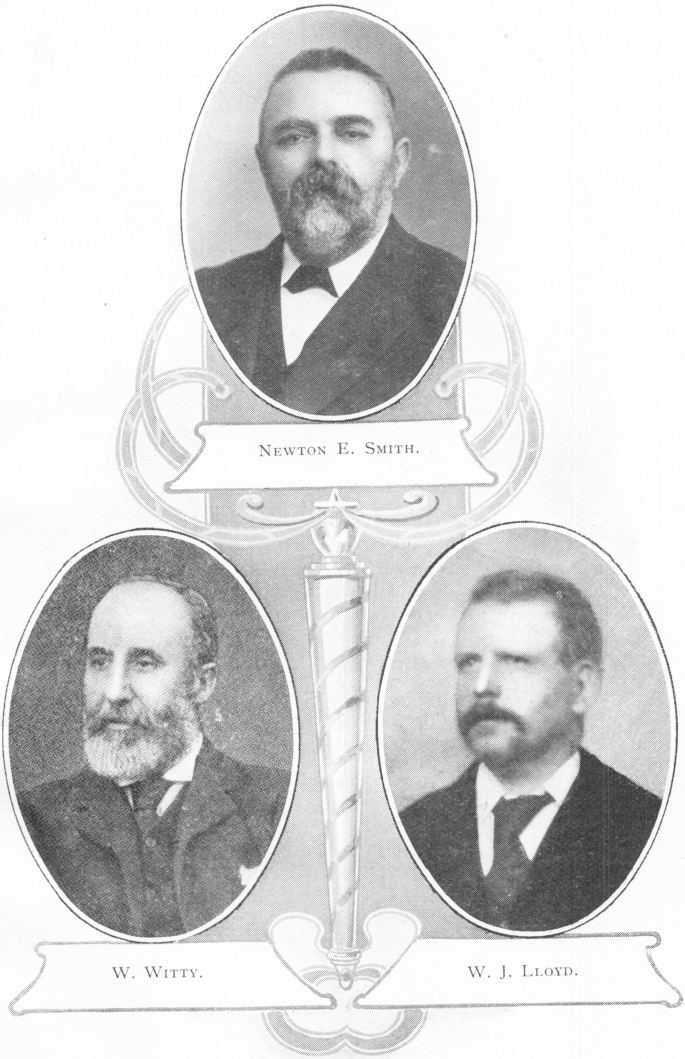
For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Bristol and Dist. Coal Dept.—	£	£	£
1889	74	15	8
1890	580	107	2
1891	558	153	*24
1892	588	147	4
1893 (3 Quarters)	395	125	16
1894	736	215	17
1895	758	235	11
1896	1227	316	16
1897	1848	433	97
1898	2335	636	90
1899	3158	837	*22
1900	4034	1017	381
1901	4464	974	187
1902	4567	1180	*10
1903	3815	1105	162
1904	5378	1451	450
1905 (3 Quarters only)	5243	1352	529
Bristol & Dist. Boot & Shoe Dept.			
1890	31	12	*3
1891	252	84	*7
1892	240	84	*10
1893 (3 Quarters)	237	69	6
1894	319	80	11
1895	382	46	24
1896	5[illegible]5	68	44
1897	[illegible]1	77	65
1898	898	86	83
1899	1064	96	112
1900	1190	112	198
1901	1279	136	120
1902	1245	155	180
1903	1486	222	131
1904	1802	256	62
1905 (3 Quarters)	1380	207	120
Bristol and District Boot Repairs—			
1894	26	18	*3
1895	96	50	*7
1896	118	68	*10
1897	118	80	*11
1898	126	82	6
1899	137	88	7

* Loss.

DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Bristol & District Boot Repairs (*cont.*)–	£	£	£
1900	151	118	*3
1901	173	144	*3
1902	145	51	2
1903	177	124	2
1904	282	239	4
1905 (3 Quarters)	233	207	*26
Bristol and Dist. Drapery Dept.—			
1890	32	6	3
1891	171	25	28
1892	113	22	14
1893 (3 Quarters)	125	20	12
1894	221	28	15
1895	475	52	52
1896	1024	110	91
1897	1276	146	134
1898	1444	172	154
1899	1679	240	166
1900	2185	366	215
1901	2889	516	330
1902	3643	614	301
1903	3380	578	323
1904	5819	818	321
1905 (3 Quarters)	5126	775	383
Bristol and District Bakery Dept.–			
1888 (3 Quarters)	523	138	*9
1889	706	205	45
1890	983	276	88
1891	1537	381	136
1892	1576	366	130
1893 (3 Quarters)	1220	324	170
1894	1629	479	177
1895	1841	559	272
1896	2628	664	432
1897	4154	866	737
1898	7027	1473	917
1899	9453	2395	1187
1900	11182	2387	1787
1901	14562	2999	2034
1902	18671	3373	1725
1903	24213	4562	2827
1904	30214	6346	3822
1905 (3 Quarters)	27351	5384	4521

* Loss.



MANAGERS BRISTOL AND DISTRICT SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the progressive nature of some reforms indicated in the last chapter, there were tendencies developing during the same period upon which comment must be made.

On the whole, the policy aimed at was commercial prosperity. The fortunes of the Store in 1892 were at such a low ebb that the immediate necessity was to resuscitate and inspire confidence in the Society as a business undertaking. Expediency was an ever-present concern in the shaping of policy, and one can easily see that this elastic consideration, at times, obscured all others from the official mind.

One of the first indications appears with a resolution as to pricing stock for balance sheet purposes. Now, there can be but one sound method of dealing with this question, and that is, only to accept, as an asset, the lowest market estimate. To do otherwise is to declare a profit which has never been earned, and which, moreover, never may be earned. The safe method is to calculate the value of all goods at prime cost, or, if the market has fallen, at their depreciated value. The adoption of such a course is in accordance with principles of sound finance. The decision referred to, however, dealt with the matter with a simple directness, but no less incorrect fashion. It was decided to price stock at retail value, deducting 25 per cent for drapery, 20 per cent for boots, and 15 per cent for grocery. This course would doubtless have been defended upon the score of expediency and approximate accuracy; but it was a step in the wrong direction, and helped to start a train of circumstances which produced feelings of mistrust at a later period.

It may be, too, that the knowledge of their own expedients was responsible for a suspicion which seems to have been entertained by the Committee against other democratic institutions. For instance, in December, 1893, the C.W.S. had to draw £18,000 from their reserve fund to pay a 2d. dividend, and the reason given at the Quarterly Meeting was that, owing to depreciation of duty, large stocks of currants had been disposed of at a very heavy loss. The delegate who attended on the Society's behalf did not accept this explanation, although there is no evidence to show that he voiced his plea in the meeting; but, on returning to the Committee, he expressed his opinion that the real explanation was that preferences had been shown to Societies in the North. It does not appear that this announcement was considered to be at all remarkable, and one can only conclude either that some prejudice already existed or that there was a considerable deficiency in Co-operative knowledge and understanding among the Committee who accepted such a statement. Obviously, had such been the case, their duty would have been to sift the matter according to the best of their ability; but this most extraordinary allegation against the *bona-fides* of their federal institution seems to have been accepted quite as a matter of course. This incident would not, perhaps, be worth recording but that it illustrates my suggestion that the adoption of expedients ourselves leads us to tolerate unworthy suspicions as to the actions of others.

One of the cardinal virtues of the Co-operative Store movement has been the care with which financial stability has been ensured by constant depreciations of buildings and fixed stock. By those deficient in Co-operative knowledge and experience it has often been felt that the system lays, in undue measure, a responsibility upon the present for the benefit of future generations. Quite naturally enough, members are anxious to secure the

maximum advantage from their joint trading here and now; those who come after will be able to apply themselves to the problem from their own point of view. Large depreciations and heavy reserve funds are, therefore, regarded rather jealously, for it is felt that to be over generous in these matters is to make sacrifices in respect to dividend. Consequently, it is comparatively easy for responsible officials to turn a blind eye to the necessity for depreciation and reserves.

Comment has already been made upon the huge responsibilities which had been undertaken in buildings; and now, when trade was practically at a standstill, the pressure began to make itself felt rather uncomfortably. Upon the comparatively small turnover the average yield of profit in the gross was fair and reasonable, more especially since the change of management. Attempts were made to keep down expenses in wages, and by accepting low tenders for services rendered by outsiders, not always with the unanimous approval of the members; but, notwithstanding all economies, expenses were still too high to permit the return of what was considered a "proper dividend." Obviously, some sacrifice had to be made, and the easiest method was to postpone depreciation. There were plenty of specious arguments in favour of this limitation, but the main consideration was a larger balance for dividend. A large dividend would mean more trade, more trade a lower percentage of expenses, and it is not surprising that such pleas carried all before them. In a crisis such as this undoubtedly was, arguments for moderate depreciation and limited paper reserves looked extremely plausible. The needs of the hour were made to justify a policy of depreciating as much as could be afforded. But it was dangerous finance, as was found subsequently.

In spite of the rules, which provided for the depreciation of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the original cost of building, the profits were allocated quarter after quarter with a total

disregard of this most important proviso. Premises were purchased, and as they were altered from time to time to suit the Society's requirements no attempt was made to wipe out that which had been expended in excess of their marketable value. Thus, the property at Lawrence Hill in 1895 was actually valued as an asset at a higher figure than in 1890, when the premises had just been handed over by the builders.

The same thing happened at Newfoundland Road, in spite of the fact that in this case the building was an old one. During the time the Society was renting the property something over £89 had been spent on improvements. When, in 1890, the premises were purchased for £500, a further £36 was expended, and upon the balance sheet of November 11th, 1890, these premises appear as an asset, valued at £618. There does appear to have been a feeling that these premises were valued excessively high, for a very modest attempt was made to depreciate the amount, but even then in five years' time they still appeared at £582, or £82 more than the price originally paid for them. The purchase of property in St. George's Road followed, and the same methods were adopted. The cost, given in November, 1891, as £1,080, increased to £1,107 by November, 1895.

Obviously, this kind of thing could not go on for ever. While, doubtless, properties which had been adapted from time to time were of more value to the Society, it is very questionable whether their real value had been enhanced by an amount corresponding to that which had been expended upon them. But, once committed to such a policy, evidently our friends found it was hard to retract. Their education of the rank and file had encouraged the idea that an increasing dividend was an indication of increasing prosperity, and to do duty to the depreciation and reserve funds must have been at the expense of dividend.

In February, 1895, the Committee reported that, owing to the expiration of the lease of Lawrence Hill No. 2, they had found it necessary to utilise that building themselves; but, in order to do so, extensive alterations had to be undertaken. In the balance sheet for the following quarter these expenses were met by the creation of an alteration fund, to which nearly the whole of the amount expended was debited. This was the same policy, but not quite so direct. It is true that such a method of dealing with extraordinary expenditure on buildings and fixtures had something to recommend it; many such alterations are of a permanently useful character, and their special utility may be that which will save expense in the future; thus it may be legitimate to adopt the course of making futurity bear some of the cost. Nevertheless, the policy is a dangerous one. It is so easy to persuade ourselves that all alterations and even repairs may be thus treated; so much so as to entirely cancel the depreciation fund altogether. From the 1895 balance sheet, when this expedient was resorted to, this method of dealing with alterations crystallised into a system, the account being added to time after time, becoming, with every subsequent addition, more of a delusion and a snare. With apparent disregard of the relative size of this fund to the total depreciations, quarter after quarter, the Chairman would refer in terms of glowing pride to the hidden reserves of the Society; and, as the dividend was a good one, usually 1s. 8d. or 1s. 9d., the members congratulated themselves on their increasing prosperity.

When this policy was initiated in 1895 the dividend was 1s. 5d., but it rose to 1s. 9d. at the same time as this alteration fund was growing, and herein there can be no doubt whatever that the principles of sound finance were departed from; for, until the fund was completely wiped out, there was no justification for advancing the rate of dividend.

The following table has been compiled from the balance sheets of the period to show how this method of account-keeping nullified the effects of depreciation, and to give some indication of the disastrous effects which might have ensued had the policy been persisted in much longer.

STATEMENT SHOWING DEPRECIATION UPON PROPERTY AT VARYING PERIODS, AND THE EFFECT OF AN ALTERATION ACCOUNT THEREON.

Balance Sheet for	Total Expenditure on Property & Machinery, including Alteration Account.	Total Amount of Depreciation to Date.	Nominal Value of Property and Machinery.	Total Alteration Additions to Date.	Depreciation of Alterations to Date.	Balance of Alterations taken as Assets.	Nominal Depreciation.	Actual Depreciation.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	%	%
May, 1895 ...	5513	626	4887	186	12	174	11	8¼
Feb., 1898 ...	10963	884	10079	707	250	457	8	3¾
July, 1900 ...	22081	2907	19174	1932	932	1000	13	8¼
April, 1902 ...	30821	5166	25655	3652	1609	2043	17	10
Oct., 1902 ...	31499	5739	25710	3813	1759	2054	18	10⅙
April, 1903 ...	32360	6408	*25952	3843	2009	1834	19¾	14
July, 1903 ...	33152	6756	26396	3843	2109	1734	20	15
,, 1904 ...	36509	8490	28019	3843	2509	1334	23	19
,, 1905 ...	47434	11069	36365	3843	2909	934	23	21

* Property valued £22,125; add Nominal Value of Machinery, &c., £2,803; Total, £24,928.

It will be observed from this statement that from May, 1895, till October, 1902, the alteration account steadily mounted upward; and, notwithstanding that the nominal percentage of depreciation at the later period was considerably in advance of the earlier date, owing to the existence of an alteration account, for which little or no credit could be taken, the actual depreciation was only 2 per cent higher in 1902 than in 1895, with a very considerably increased risk.

Towards the close of 1902 the members began to get uneasy, and an appeal was made to have the properties of the Society valued by competent valuers. This was

proceeded with, and in April the results were brought before the members. The valuers' figures showed that the properties were worth £22,125, and, as these were credited to the Society's accounts as only £20,568, it might appear that there was a balance in favour of the Society of £1,567. But, obviously, the valuers' figures were inclusive of alterations, whereas the Society's figures were exclusive, and a further sum of £1,833, the amount of the alteration fund at the time, had to be added. This meant that the property of the Society was over valued by themselves to the extent of £266, notwithstanding all previous depreciation. On the other hand, included in the Society's trade property account were also large expenditures upon fixed and rolling stock and machinery, the liberal treatment of which, in respect to depreciation, helped to save the situation. Altogether, £5,193 had been thus expended, and depreciation had been made to the extent of £2,391, so that the real position was approximately as follows:—

	Valuers' Figures.	Society Credit.
	£	£
*Land and Buildings	22125	20558
Alteration Fund	...	1833
Total	22125	22391
Deficit	266	...
	22391	22391

	Total Cost.	Total Depreciation.	Nominal Value.
	£	£	£
Fixed and Rolling Stock and Machinery	5193	2390	2803
Add Deficit on Land and Buildings	...	...	266
Net Nominal Value of Fixtures, Rolling Stock, and Machinery	...	...	3069

*The Balance Sheet figures set out above included a sum of £750 paid for Kingsdown property, which was not submitted to valuation.

It is clear from this that there was little, if any, margin to spare for contingencies. Fixed, rolling stock, and machinery, costing £5,193, might have been worth £3,069 to a going concern, but at best this was a doubtful asset. Evidently this was grasped by the leaders, for immediately a change of policy was instituted. Nothing more was added to the alteration account, and steps were taken to depreciate it as quickly as possible out of existence; and two years later the real depreciation had gone up to 21 per cent on the whole property. Further, substantial additions were made from time to time to the reserve fund, so that this fund advanced from £556 in April, 1903, when members' claims were £29,332, to £1,324 in July, 1905, when members' claims were £48,562. This was a fairly substantial rate of advance, considering the increases in depreciation which were taking place simultaneously.

It is not reasonable to expect, during the process of transference of trade from competitive to co-operative methods, that Co-operators will altogether escape the influence of the environment within which they operate. The financial policy referred to in this chapter, within certain limits, would not altogether be condemned by commercial usage; for in no other department of life is it so universally accepted as an axiom that the end justifies the means. Co-operators have other very definite aims than the mere aggregations of trade and profits; and, apart from the danger of over-expansion, it is because this policy of commercial megalomania is necessarily all-absorbing that it should be exorcised from Co-operative practice.

KINGSDOWN PARADE BRANCH, COTHAM.





GLOUCESTER ROAD BRANCH, BISHOPSTON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE may now return once more to that period of enthusiastic expectancy which followed immediately upon the Congress of 1893.

Reference has been made to the methods adopted to interest the general public in the trading operations of the Store; and it is pleasing to note that if the response was slow, it was none the less sure. Here and there appear strong indications that among a section of the members, at least, there was developing a spirit of true Co-operative enterprise, a disposition to infuse considerations more sentimental than commercial into the operations of the Store, evidently inspired by the closer contact which was operating between the three branches of the Society. Prominent in this connection was the Women's Guild, at one time urging that the suppliers of hats to the Society's members should only offer for sale those goods which are certified by the trade union label to have been manufactured under fair conditions of labour; at another, asking that the men who work for the Society out of doors, coal hauliers, and such like, should be provided with oilskins. In both requests they were successful. Small details in themselves, perhaps, but they speak eloquently not only of keen observation, but also of practical Co-operative faith on the part of the women. In the number of hours worked by employés a considerable improvement was effected; for whereas in 1890 the number of hours per week averaged 62½ for each employé, in May, 1894, the average was 55½, and the Secretary of the Early Closing Association wrote congratulating the Society upon the fact.

It is not often one hears of a "nomination" taking effect, probably because comparatively few people know of this privilege in connection with a Co-operative Society. Members are entitled, if they desire it, to nominate the person to whom their investment in the

Society may be paid in case of their decease. The nomination is registered in a book kept at the Store for the purpose. Such declaration is binding upon the Society, and takes legal precedence even of a will. Without this convenient form of registration the legatee and the Society become implicated in cumbersome methods of legal procedure in order to satisfactorily transfer the claims of a member who has died. In June, 1894, an amount of £24. 19s. 4d. was paid to a person thus nominated. The fact is recorded to remind those of our readers who are Store members that such a simple safeguard is worthy of attention.

The question of holidays for employés is one in which Co-operators as a whole are taking a lead. Apart from considerations of moral right, beyond doubt business must benefit in the long run by having its human machinery occasionally revitalised. That is but common sense; but it must be remembered, too, that in many cases the circumstances attaching to employment in distributive industry make it impossible to be exact in respect to hours. A thoroughly conscientious employé will render much service over and above his ordinary routine, actuated by a keen sense of duty. How much more intense is that desire when there is added a feeling of fellowship with those worked for! The initiative for improved conditions of employment must proceed from the employers if the maximum of good is to result. When employés have to push for concessions, the flavour is gone from them even before they are granted. In July, 1894, the Committee granted six days' holiday per year to heads of departments. This was a somewhat halting step, but it was a move in the right direction.

One of the difficulties which the Co-operative movement is having to surmount is that of defining the limit of each Society's sphere of operations. As the movement grows it is obvious that overlapping must occur unless steps are taken to persuade Societies into sinking their differences in a common interest for the movement.

The various Societies in Bristol were many years in arriving at an understanding, and eventually settled the

matter in the best possible way by amalgamation; but to their credit it must be recorded that a mutual agreement was arrived at before amalgamation was thought of in a practical way.

It will be interesting just here to follow the course of this controversy, for such it became. The discussion first arose between Bristol and District and Bedminster Societies, each of which complained that the other was canvassing their district. There could be no doubt as to the attitude of the officials. Each Committee appeared to be determined to retain what it conceived to be its rights. In July, 1894, the fiat went forth from Bristol and District that members shifting into the area of Bedminster district were to be followed up. As might have been expected, similar action was taken by the other side. Bedminster members were followed into the Bristol area. For some years it was no uncommon sight to see the two Societies dispensing their goods by cart in the same street. The arrangement, if lacking in common sense, was, at any rate, mutual, and no special ill-feeling resulted in consequence. It was simply a case of "You mind your own business, and we will do likewise." Politic, but scarcely Co-operative!

The feeling of general *camaraderie* engendered by the growth of the Bristol and Somerset Conference Association was largely responsible for breaking down this mutually constructed barrier. Representatives from both Societies meeting at conferences together, making journeys together, could not fail in time to come to a better understanding as to local affairs. It must have struck them at times as somewhat incongruous that whereas abroad they advocated principles, at home they consulted interests. It was not, however, until 1899 that practical steps were taken to deal with this expensive anomaly.

In July of that year the matter was seriously discussed by the Bedminster Committee, as a result of which discussion a letter was sent to the Committee of the Bristol and District Society. A Joint Conference was arranged, and on September 28th, 1899, it was reported

that a mutual understanding had been arrived at by both Societies. It was conceded :—

1. That the line of demarcation should be the Feeder Canal.

2. That each Society should supply the other with lists of members residing in the territory beyond this line.

3. The acceptance of new members to be forthwith deferred until the Society affected had been consulted.

Of course, it might happen that, in spite of all arrangements by the Committees, some members might still, for reasons more or less sentimental, prefer to continue to be members of that Society which was situate over the border. Such might still retain membership and deal with the Society of their choice, but would have to fetch their own goods, each Society having agreed to confine its delivery system to its own district. Thus, after fifteen years of occasional hostility, the two Societies framed a common Co-operative policy, paving the way for an even broader acceptance of the ideal which was realised in the fulness of time.

One of the features in propaganda work carried out in Bristol has been that of giving the children of members an outing once a year. It was suggested on one occasion that permission to attend be granted conditionally upon purchases to the extent of £4 per quarter being made, but upon being brought to the quarterly meeting this barring clause was promptly negatived, and the open door maintained. Of late years the responsibility for arranging these annual treats has devolved upon the District Councils, the origin and constitution of which are referred to elsewhere.

These annual treats are eagerly looked forward to by the youngsters, and a considerable amount of pleasurable good feeling is engendered among the adults in arranging the details necessary for the day's enjoyment.

Following on the Congress of 1893, there was naturally much discussion in Bristol as to the merits of Co-operation in general, and of the Bristol and District Society in particular. Correspondence in the local newspapers often turned upon this topic, much to the welcome

advertisement of the Societies; trade and membership took a forward leap, and progress in these respects has been their good fortune ever since.

Once more buildings occupied the attention of the officials. The Secretary was asked to prepare plans for a new Store at Newfoundland Road, which was done, and, though approved of, laid aside in favour of more pressing needs. Interest was waking up in other quarters of the city. From north and east came requests for Branches to be established. The Committee lighted upon some premises in the Gloucester Road, Bishopston, which on July 12th were purchased for £1,110, and the Society came into possession three months later. Considerable alterations had to be made before the shop could be utilised for the Society's purposes.

The Committee did not let the grass grow under their feet. While these alterations were proceeding something was being done to establish the trade in the district. Two of the most prominent members were co-opted to the Committee, which action was cordially endorsed by the members at the next Quarterly Meeting. A Council was formed, and trading commenced on a small scale. For the few weeks which remained before the opening of the Store very little business was done; but propaganda was being well maintained throughout the district. It was here that the Society first met with a rebuff from a representative of the Church. Hitherto, as has been noted, many of the leaders among those set apart for the cure of souls had lent the weight of their good opinion to the movement, but it was left to the Vicar of Horfield to break the spell. With that dogmatism which attaches itself quite naturally to the superior person, he wrote that he could not lend the parish room for a meeting to establish Co-operative Stores, which were not needed in that district. Some of his parishioners thought otherwise, and the result is seen in the growth of the largest branch which has been established by the Society. The question was raised as to whether the reverend gentleman's letter should be read at the opening meeting, but, with tolerance as discreet as it was kind, this was negatived. There can be

no possible utility in attempting to meet such assertions; the only way to reply is to put your faith into action; and the progress which has been maintained all along the line by Bishopston Branch since it opened is an all-sufficient commentary upon the Vicar's estimate as to the needs of his flock.

One of the advantages which attach to a Women's Guild connected with the Society is the very practical suggestions which they occasionally make regarding the most commonplace details. A Committee, consisting entirely of men, will sit night after night in a dreary room, with walls bare, upturned boxes in lieu of chairs, and a table improvised, perhaps, with a few boards supported by a couple of barrels out of the Store. The advent of a woman, however, soon changes the aspect of things. Pictures, if but a showcard or two, look down from the walls; a cloth on the table; and at least one or two chairs grace the sanctum of the Board. The Women's Guild had for some time been permitted to use the Committee-room at Newfoundland Road; and one cold night in November, 1895, when the Committee were dreaming their dreams of aggrandisement, planning buildings here, there, and everywhere, they were brought down to prosaic fact by a letter from the President of the Women's Guild, asking that their meeting-room might be kept clean. It does not appear to have occurred to these men that there was anything incongruous in their discussing a regenerated state of society, all the while permitting themselves to be environed in chaos, dirt, and cold. It speaks well for their enthusiasm, but little for their sense of fitness. A resolution was promptly tabled that the room should be dusted and cleaned, and grates brushed weekly, well scrubbed monthly, and a fire kept continually laid. The Manager was instructed to see these arrangements duly carried into effect.

In October, 1895, the Coal Office was opened for the whole day, and for the first time the very poor members were catered for by arrangements being made to do a hundredweight trade. The expense in working this department was the subject of much criticism at times;

but the sentiment of the strong helping the weak has always prevailed, so that no undue burden is placed upon those whose means will not allow them to stock large quantities at one time.

Just about this time the question of direct Labour representation on the municipal body was agitating the workers of Bristol. A Labour Electoral Association was formed, and with a view to helping their funds it was decided to embark in the business of supplying members with goods. The Bristol and District Society seemed to fear that this might lead to competition with themselves, and took steps to acquaint the C.W.S. with the constitution of this concern, in case the federal institution might have been disposed to supply goods. The experiment was not a success, however, and a few months later the Bristol and District Committee were asked to buy what little stock had been accumulated by these political shopkeepers.

In December, 1895, the Co-operative Wholesale Society brought out the "Wheatsheaf," a monthly publication devoted to articles of Co-operative interest, but more particularly with reference to their Productive Departments. Any Society could have this localised, with the addition of a front and back page at a nominal cost, extra pages being given at a further cost. The Committee promptly saw in this an excellent advertising medium, and ordered 800 copies a month for Bristol. This quantity has been increased from time to time. It seems a pity, however, that no steps have been taken to preserve at least the local portion of these publications; for the purposes of this history the matter therein contained would have been invaluable.

The year 1896 opened very auspiciously. In January there were suggestions made respecting a Branch at Greenbank, where a number of new houses were being erected, and where amongst others a goodly number of Co-operators were settling. Our good friend, the late Mr. Gilmore Barnett, was interested in the development of part of this estate, and generously came forward in May, offering to become responsible up to £300 for a Hall and a

Library if the Committee were prepared to erect a Store in the neighbourhood. Needless to say this offer was gratefully accepted, and the scheme was immediately put into operation. Unfortunately, however, there were conditions attaching to the gift which were not clearly understood by the Committee until the work was all but complete, and the books were not forthcoming. Some unpleasant incidents with the builder, who was Mr. Barnett's nominee, though working under the Committee's directions, appear to have raised side issues, so that eventually the Society accepted full responsibility for the undertaking, and the Greenbank Branch became another outpost of the movement in Bristol. It was opened on November 23rd, 1896, with a Public Meeting, at which Mr. George Hawkins and Mr. Gilmore Barnett were the principal speakers.

In February of the same year the Committee made up their minds that the bookkeeping and general clerical work was sufficiently important to demand the whole-time attention of the Secretary, and accordingly appointed Mr. T. H. Smith to the post. Mr. Smith, it will be remembered, was engaged for evening work in 1890, so that he had already served the Society for nearly six years, and the Committee were undoubtedly fortunate in being now able to retain his services in the sole interests of the Society. A word as to Mr. Smith himself will perhaps not be out of place here, for, like many other permanent officials in more exalted positions, the Secretary of a Co-operative Society, though often little known, wields a most potent influence and is a force to be reckoned with when divided counsels threaten to cause a disruption in the Society. His duties bring him into touch with all parties and sections, and tactful neutrality becomes an indispensable virtue. In this quality Mr. Smith has conspicuously abounded, and on more than one occasion has stayed what might have been a violent dissension at the general meetings of members. His mastery of the intricacies of the balance sheet have at times been put to a severe test. He does not shine as an orator, but he has never failed to assert his supremacy

in the department over which he presides. In deference to suggestions made by critics he has from time to time rearranged his methods of tabulating accounts. He has grown with the Society, and has come to be regarded by the members as an almost indispensable part of the internal machinery. He is trustworthy and sound, and is held in great esteem by the members of the Society. At the time he was permanently appointed there was beginning to show itself among the members a tendency to divide into two camps. For a few years this led to much hostile criticism of the Committee, but Mr. Smith was never identified with one side or the other, and remained throughout the adviser of the Committee and a faithful servant of the Society as a whole. Of this controversy and its effect upon the Society's policy we shall have something to say in a subsequent chapter, but it is referred to here just as a passing tribute to the Secretary that he held himself strictly aloof from the ripples and eddies which troubled the surface, and wisely concentrated his energies upon the main stream, which ever swept onward with unfailing regularity.

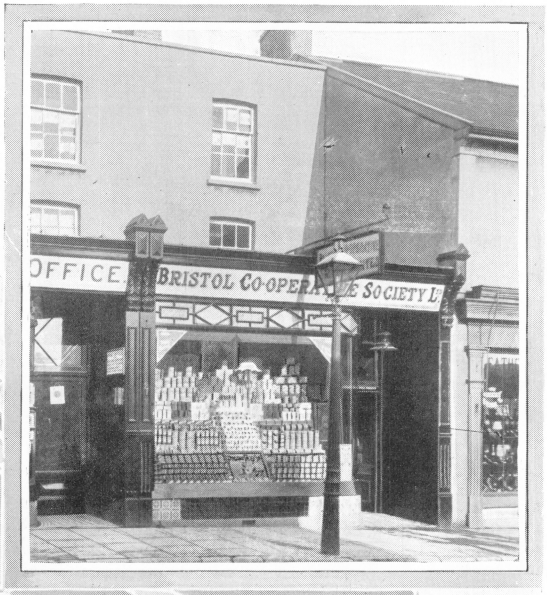
Simultaneously with the appointment of a permanent Secretary it was thought advisable to transfer the headquarters of the Society from Newfoundland Road to Lawrence Hill, where the bulk of the business was being done, and where the interest of the largest proportion of the members centred. In accordance with the Act of Parliament this move was registered on February 19th, 1896, and Lawrence Hill has remained since then the registered office of the Society.

The position at this time was fairly central ; Branches were already established at Newfoundland Road, Hotwells, Bishopston, and Greenbank, the Bakery was also situate at Lawrence Hill, as were also the Coal, Drapery, and Boot Departments.

Another district, however, was beginning to call for attention, and, by request of some of the residents there, a Public Meeting was held at Staple Hill, and a Council formed to institute propaganda in the Staple Hill, Kingswood, and Warmley area. It was agreed that if

100 members could be found to deposit £80 of capital the Committee would feel themselves justified in opening a Branch. It is interesting to note that in this case the Council preceded the formation of the Branch. The terms were duly fulfilled by the beginning of 1897, and property was purchased at Staple Hill in May of that year, consisting of three cottages, a quarry, and 50 perches of land. This was encouraging to the Staple Hill friends, but there were occasional evidences of rifts in the lute. It is not quite clear if the Committee fully realised the nature of the trade which had to be catered for in this district, and doubtless that led to a little friction between them and the members concerned. Hitherto the Society's operations had been practically limited to a town trade; but here was a district just on the outskirts of the town, and extending some distance into the country. New wants had to be provided for, in consideration of different methods of life; wants which are common to all had to be dealt with according to a different standard of comfort from that which is set up in a large town. These things had to be found out by experience, and, after some little hesitation, the Committee reverted to the old solution, that of co-opting a member from the district to their body. This was in November, 1897, and again the members at the Quarterly Meeting cordially endorsed their action. Staple Hill has not always seemed to respond to the best traditions of Co-operation, but it may be that the conditions attaching to the borderland have not always been fully grasped by the folk at home, as it were, and there have been misunderstandings on both sides. This Branch had the unique misfortune of being pioneered just at that period when partisan feeling began to show itself acutely in the Society, and from the influence thus cast over them the members out there have never quite shaken themselves free. Still, good work has been accomplished, notwithstanding all discouragements, for Co-operation is one of those flowers which flourish in any soil, and under varying conditions. The comparison of sale returns testifies to the growing steadfastness of Staple Hill in Co-operative trading, at any rate.

KINGSWOOD BRANCH.





STAPLE HILL BRANCH.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profit.
Bishopston Branch—	£	£	£
1895	74	11	4
1896	2804	257	151
1897	3937	328	340
1898	4731	409	461
1899	5685	511	645
1900	6831	625	695
1901	7960	731	771
1902	10117	944	995
1903	10758	929	1134
1904	12960	1144	1522
1905 (3 Quarters)	9985	960	1012
Greenbank Branch—			
1897	3022	313	254
1898	3498	330	275
1899	4649	450	382
1900	5437	516	305
1901	5546	539	486
1902	6929	629	621
1903	7444	658	663
1904	8867	790	957
1905 (3 Quarters)	6896	656	577
Staple Hill Branch—			
1898	2970	330	133
1899	3238	398	199
1900	2938	381	169
1901	3407	419	217
1902	4068	440	379
1903	4371	498	247
1904	4755	551	398
1905 (3 Quarters)	3488	427	236
Bristol and District Clothing Dept.			
1896	75	25	17
1897	761	136	90
1898	865	169	72
1899	965	254	184
1900	1056	317	141
1901	1585	448	174
1902	2000	205	286
1903	2036	562	214
1904	2448	724	287
1905 (3 Quarters)	2151	624	364

CHAPTER XIX.

THE policy referred to in a previous chapter in respect to finance was not without its effect in other departments. The appeal for more trade and a higher dividend was successful, as we have seen, but it brought the evils of the competitive system in its train.

It cannot be too often stated that the aim of Co-operators is not so much to make a profit as to arrange an equitable division of profit, to introduce the principles of honesty and fair dealing into commercial affairs, and to transact business upon lines calculated to raise the moral tone and intellectual standard of the people. The mere seeking after dividend has a deadening effect upon all the best instincts of Co-operation, and for a period a large number in the Society succumbed to this influence.

But the measures which had been taken to stimulate the cupidity of the many also revivified the Co-operative ideal for a few. Through the comradeship engendered by Women's Guilds and Councils, a number of energetic reformers were brought into vital touch with the Society's operations, and, as a consequence, criticism was frequent, and not always favourable to the Committee. The matter of internal administration was questioned from time to time, and, true to their policy of "thorough," the Committee sought to justify themselves rather than submit to the pressure which had been brought to bear upon them to change their outlook.

As to the general body of members, some were with the reformers, but the largest proportion at first were with the Committee.* Gradually there emerged from the controversy two parties, each intent upon forcing its ideal upon the Society, and, as time went on, becoming more and more estranged from each other, more and

* This appears to have been the local contribution to a general awakening of the reform spirit which, in various ways, had been showing itself throughout the whole Co-operative movement, and, in fact, throughout the whole of the industrial community since 1888-9.

more extravagant in the denunciation of their perverse brethren.

This phenomenon is quite the usual thing in English public life, and, within certain limits, the influence of such controversies is to make for progress.

Apart from the merits or demerits of the respective policies, the reformers were always at a disadvantage; they were few in number, and they were attacking an establishment which, apparently, had the weight of numbers behind it. The tendency of all governing bodies is to resist reform until it is obvious that further resistance will imperil their own existence; and Co-operative governing bodies are not exceptions to this general principle. It was but natural that the Committee should resist, as long as they dared, this pressure from without. The movement did not come to a head all at once; the minority had to work hard to convert a somewhat indifferent majority to its views. But, with persistent patience, it continued to press for a more Co-operative policy to be adopted. One abuse after another was fastened upon, and all and sundry worried until steps were taken to find a remedy.

As a result of their efforts, in March, 1897, through the intervention of a Hotwells member, it was agreed that a Joint Conference of District Councils, the Women's Guild, and the General Committee should meet and thrash out the question of an excess of boy labour being utilised in the Store. At that meeting the Committee pleaded that, although the proportion seemed large, they were justified on the grounds that they thus ensured the training of their own men, which was very necessary in view of the opening of fresh Branches. The reformers, however, were not satisfied, having but little confidence in the Committee as then constituted. This argument was too specious; it seemed to evade the real issue, and they cast about for other grounds for pushing their propaganda. A deputation was accordingly sent to the Committee urging that full trade union conditions of wages and hours should be observed throughout the Society. As a result of this deputation a Special Committee was formed in

May, 1897, to review the situation and submit a scale of wages. Nearly a year elapsed before their deliberations were ended, and then an imposing scale of minimum and maximum wages was presented, which, after discussion and some adverse criticism at the Monthly Meeting in May, 1898, was adopted. This, the first scale accepted by the Bristol and District Society, did not err on the side of generosity if compared with subsequent ones; but its chief value lay in the acceptance of a minimum wage; and the policy then decided upon established a basis upon which it was easy to improve.

Another matter in which the reformers interested themselves was the attitude of the Committee towards their federal institution, the C.W.S. In the main, there was a tendency to ignore Co-operative considerations in favour of commercial ones, sometimes even when the material gain was more or less a doubtful quantity. It leaked out that important business was being placed in the hands of competitive merchants, and, although the members could not criticise the details of these transactions, their Co-operative instincts rebelled against such anomalous proceedings, and unceasingly they urged a more sympathetic understanding. They argued with convincing truth that, while the Society remained disloyal to its federation, it was scarcely logical to expect loyalty from its own members. In the end victory rested with the reformers. By various ways, not always in strict accordance with the democratic ideals professed, by taking advantage of every wind which blew unfavourably for the orthodox party, they succeeded in displacing the more obstinate from the Committee, substituting men and women of their own persuasion.

But, meanwhile, the long controversy had its effect upon the internal administration of the Store. Both parties being extremists in their views, it was scarcely surprising that those who had to steer a middle course were sometimes awkwardly situated. Amongst these were the principal employés.

The struggle between the two parties was mainly for improved labour conditions, and the Committee found

themselves in the same position as an individualist employer who is being pressed by a trade union, with this most important difference, however, that here the pressure was from an intelligible section of the real masters of the situation. Still, for the time being, details of administration were strictly the Committee's prerogative, and, feeling this, they resented the interference. Quite naturally, such pressure was not calculated to promote the most sympathetic relations between themselves and the employés.

It is more than probable that this state of things was responsible for a good deal of friction "behind the scenes" during the whole of 1897, a climax being reached on January 12th, 1898, when Mr. Newton Smith tendered his resignation as Manager. The ostensible reason was that the Committee persisted in appointing as assistant manager a young man in whom Mr. Smith had no confidence; but there can be no doubt that he felt himself out of harmony with the general policy then pursued, and accordingly retired from what he felt to be an impossible position.

It is abundantly evident that the Committee were anxious to assert themselves more fully in the operative duties connected with the management; it may be they felt that the Manager was too powerful for them to control; it may be that the controversy then proceeding had the effect of showing them that they knew but little of the actual internal affairs connected with the shop management; but it is certain that the means they adopted were not such as to make for smooth and easy administration. Up to the time of his resignation, the personality of Mr. Smith was sufficient to counteract much of this tendency, but it very soon became painfully apparent after the appointment of his successor. Regulations and orders more or less restrictive and often petty and irritating were pressed upon the new manager, who, after struggling against conditions for a matter of twelve months, with little or no satisfaction to himself or anyone else, bowed to the inevitable and resigned. This by the way.

When the news of Mr. Smith's action began to circulate among the members there was no little consternation. Quickly a requisition was signed by twenty-three members asking for a Special General Meeting to be called to consider the position. This was held on February 12th, 1898, and there was a good muster. Some severe criticisms were passed upon the action of the Committee in pressing the Manager to accept a second in whom he had not confidence, but, after the President's explanation, a vote of confidence was moved and passed.

The reformers, however, were far from satisfied, for they felt that the Committee were not only protecting themselves from a strong Manager, but placing themselves beyond the criticism of the members. Accordingly, a notice of motion was brought forward that the Monthly Meetings, which for some years had been dropped, should be resumed, and that the Committee's minutes should be subjected to discussion at these meetings.

This resolution was moved at the Quarterly Meeting on March 28th, 1898, and carried unanimously. It was claimed that this was not brought forward in a spirit of antagonism to the Committee, but with a view that the members might have sufficient knowledge of the internal affairs of the Society to share responsibility with the Committee. The discussion showed that an opinion existed that information had been withheld by the Committee, and this was resented by the members. But that which prompted the agitation was well expressed by one speaker who pointed out that "it was the governing principle, not the large sales; the conditions and wages of labour, and not the great membership, that would prove Co-operation to be the beneficial factor it was designed to be."

With the advent of Mr. Witty, the new Manager, steps were taken by the Committee to gather up the threads of all departmental affairs. Trade journals and price lists for the first time appeared on the Committee-room table. A Purchasing and Bakery Sub-Committee were formed; all letters which came to the Society's

BRISTOL AND DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE, 1900.



Top Row: Messrs. J. E. Havill, — Neale, W. H. Gillett, H. T. Merrick (*Secretary*), F. Kitley, D. Davies.
Bottom Row: Messrs. W. H. Cann, — Taylor, Mrs. E. Greenland, Mr. J. Brown (*Chairman*), Mrs. Merrick, Mr. A. E. Bragg.

BRISTOL AND DISTRICT GENERAL COMMITTEE, 1900.



Top Row: Messrs. D. Davies, W. J. Petherick, T. H. Smith (*Secretary*), W. J. Lloyd (*Manager*), A. E. Bragg.
Bottom Row: Mr. J. Spiller, Mrs. C. Fidkin, Mr. J. Brown (*President*), Mrs. L. Sheppard, Mr. H. A. Carter.

premises, private or otherwise, were ordered to be registered, and a file was kept, in order that those relating to the Society's business could be easily referred to. The regulations were good and business-like enough, but the spirit in which they were carried out left something to be desired. The Sub-Committees were new to their work, and made mistakes which brought upon them the censure of their colleagues in General Committee. The Manager felt himself "cribbed, cabined, and confined," and resented, with undue vehemence, complaints which, but for the aggressiveness of his masters, might have been settled amicably. Throughout the whole Society there was an element of touchiness which aggravated the prevailing discontent. The slightest deviation from the well-defined line laid down in the staff regulations brought upon the unlucky wight the displeasure of the Committee.

The C.W.S. naturally came in for its share, being given to understand that, unless they could treat the Society with promptitude and generally on the same business lines as could be obtained elsewhere, some change in placing the orders would have to be made. It was not so much what was said, as the manner of saying, which was significant, this statement being made by the Chairman at a Monthly Meeting, and appeared to be a lame attempt to prejudice the C.W.S. unfavourably with the members. Members, however, continued to ask for C.W.S. goods in the shops, even going so far as to complain to the Committee when unable to obtain them. A notable instance was that of candles, the contract for a supply of which had been placed outside the federation. A demand for C.W.S. make the Committee had to meet by the somewhat vague reply that "they were not supplying C.W.S. candles at present." It was the pressure of trade unionists which prompted such demands. The conditions of labour at C.W.S. factories they were in a position to control, and this was worth more to them than a consideration of ½d. or 1d. per dozen pounds in the price of candles.

Naturally, the employés were expected to be loyal to the same principles, and at the Fifty-fifth Quarterly

Meeting, by a large majority, the members passed the following resolution:—

> That we respectfully ask our Committee to take steps as soon as convenient to inform all the employés employed by this Society that we as members would be very pleased to know that they (the employés) were all members either of the Co-operative trade union or the local trade union as applied to their various spheres of employment, and that the Committee instruct the Manager to ask the following question of every employé: Are you a member of any trade union? and that the Committee report the number of persons employed by this Society, and how many are members of any trade union.

This was passed in spite of the Committee's opposition, who considered that the terms of the resolution implied a veiled compulsion.

It is a moot point how far employers should be permitted to inquire into the personal opinions of their employés. It is safe to say that Co-operators would be the first to resent any such inquisition on the part of capitalist employers, for there can be no doubt that they are but the prelude to compulsory measures from either standpoint. Trade unionism, over and over again, has had to fight for the liberty of its members, and now that the battle is won, and it has obtained recognition in the industrial world, no permanent good can accrue from adopting the methods which were condemned when the movement was struggling against odds. Men and women who cannot see the overwhelming logic of combination, but have to be pressed thus into the cause, are not only weakened morally themselves, but they have a weakening effect upon the whole body politic. In disputes of trade, as well as of nations, a volunteer soldier is worth twenty pressed men. Numbers may spell weakness in a crisis. One is not unmindful that the advantages gained by the stalwarts who combine are shared by those who remain outside; but liberty is indispensable if we would progress, for even trade unionism may not be the last word in the reorganisation of industry; and, in the meantime, one of its most powerful recommendations is its voluntary appeal to the workers.

It is not recorded that a return was supplied by the Committee in accordance with the resolution, but there

were signs that at the end of 1898 this pressure was beginning to have good effect. Overtime was abolished, and it was decided to keep the staff up to the full complement. The Bakers' Union wrote to say that the Society would be placed on the fair list, and the names of merchants with whom business had been done were to be read out at the Monthly Meetings.

There was, however, still considerable friction between the Committee and employés, so much so that comments were frequently made by the members. There was a strong feeling that the difficulty would be overcome by a system of departmental management, and this seemed on the point of receiving a trial, for the Manager was relieved of responsibility for the bakery in November, 1898. But this move was not sufficiently developed when he tendered his resignation on January 26th, 1899, and once more the old system was reverted to by the appointment of the President (Mr. W. J. Lloyd) as General Manager, upon a three years' agreement. This took place on February 28th, 1899. Three applicants for the post were to have been seen that evening, but a letter from Mr. Lloyd offering himself as an aspirant to the position upset all other calculations, and the Committee agreed quite readily to his appointment. It must have required some courage on the part of Mr. Lloyd to yield up a position in which he had wielded almost absolute power for so many years to take up the comparatively subordinate one which that of General Manager had by this time become, especially as he must have been aware that the attitude of the reforming party towards him was one of unveiled hostility. Possibly he counted on a more sympathetic support from these towards the Manager than had been accorded to the President; if so, he was not altogether mistaken. It is true that there were some mutterings at the Monthly Meetings that there was fair play for Lloyd, though there had been none for Witty, but, on the whole, the appointment was received by the members with confidence.

For the time being a truce was called between the parties, and opportunity thereby given to frame a policy

which might placate both. A more tolerant spirit evidenced itself in framing regulations, and the new Manager was taken into the closer confidence of the Committee. He was permitted to be present at all Committee meetings, and the arrangements for staff appointments were left in his hands, subject only to confirmation by the Sub-Committee; and the resolution taking the control of the Bakery Department out of the hands of the Manager was rescinded.

The reformers, who had not been altogether satisfied with the treatment which had been meted out to Mr. Witty, could not very well object to these provisions, although some of them felt suspicious and expressed themselves to the effect that Mr. Lloyd would be closely watched. They probably realised that the balance of power had now shifted in their direction, as indeed it had. It was evident to them that, though their power was limited against the influence of an elected President, in a democratic body the position of dictator could not be maintained by a paid servant. They, therefore, wisely let things take their course. Thus it was not long before they established their ascendency in the counsels of the Society; and, in spite of strenuous opposition occasionally, they have, on the whole, succeeded in retaining a supremacy. From this time forward the policy aimed at was no less commercial, but certainly more definitely constructive from a labour standpoint, putting the widest interpretation upon the term "labour."

There is little doubt that the change synchronised with Mr. Lloyd's appointment, for almost immediately, as if a sudden reaction had set in, a fresh note was sounded at the members' meetings. Criticisms as to conditions of labour ceased, and the call for less expense and more dividend occasionally found utterance. In pushing the claims of labour, it looked as if the reformers had rather overshot the mark, and some of the members began to fear they might be left out of consideration. The remark of one at a Monthly Meeting was typical of the thoughts of many. "He believed in a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, but he did like a bit of 'divi.'"

GREENBANK ROAD BRANCH, EASTON.





FISHPONDS ROAD BRANCH, FISHPONDS.

CHAPTER XX.

THE truce between the parties was but short-lived. At the Quarterly Meeting in June, 1899, there were strong indications that the struggle was about to be renewed. Some of the reformers had gained seats on the Management Committee, but, being in a minority, they were in a measure impotent, and thus they were incurring responsibility for measures of which they did not approve. It was but natural that they should desire to justify themselves to their friends. To resign their position would be but to play into the hands of the enemy. Occasionally, it is true, they repudiated their colleagues at the Monthly Meetings, but this only caused dissension and disorder. Moreover, it was felt to be undignified and tactless. Recourse was had, therefore, to an interesting expedient.

It will be remembered that upon the resumption of the Monthly Meetings in 1898 it was decided that the Committee's minutes should be open for discussion at those meetings. Up till this time these minutes had recorded the decision arrived at, as minutes usually do, with the minimum of detail. Now, however, it was brought forward that movers and seconders and the names of individual voters should be recorded also. Of course, this meant that upon all matters of divided opinion there would be unmistakable evidence as to the ultimate position of each individual. Ultimate, because, whatever may be the general outlook of an individual, one has to assume that discussion upon particular detail has some effect in determining the vote given, though such a resolution as this would do a great deal to nullify any such effect.

There is much to be said in favour of a test for representatives, and there seems no logical reason why the minutest actions of elected governors should not be open to the criticism of those they represent. But it is not at all clear that this can be estimated by votes given under a condition such as this. A strong inducement is held out to lean towards popular prejudices, and such are not inevitably the surest guides for progressive development. Further, it must be admitted that, though there may be some advantage in knowing that one's representative is sound "on the ticket" to the community as a whole, it is always some disadvantage that persons of strong individuality, however capable as administrators, are sure to be penalised by reason of their conscientious honesty. As an expedient for party purposes this was a most effective move, ensuring the supremacy and power to that party which could best organise attendances at the members' meetings; but not only those who dissented from the party shibboleth, but also those who were too large to be partisan, were thus excluded from office. While in every stage of progress it may be found desirable to institute a check or checks upon administrators, it is not always a wise policy to regard these expedients as fundamental principles. What has seemed lacking, not only in the Co-operative but in other democratic movements, is the power of dispensation when the new environment has been created, and the necessity for a continuation of such regulations is no longer vital. That which is applicable to one set of conditions may be altogether out of place, even harmful, to another; and it might be well sometimes to indulge in a little administrative sifting with a view to scrapping old machinery, and, to continue the metaphor, to instal new plant with larger driving wheels and fewer small cogs.

A suggestion which was of larger import, but which appears to have been prematurely put forward, was made in the same year. It was to the effect that candidates for the Committee should attend a meeting of members and give their views on Co-operation. The suggestion,

unfortunately, was not acted upon. It would certainly have been interesting, and probably instructive, to have had these expressions of opinion recorded. The principles of Co-operation, of course, are unalterable, but the system through which those principles operate, and the measure of their application, depend very largely upon the intelligence and knowledge of the individuals who take up responsible positions in the movement. As we have already seen, the instinct for personal gain is as powerful among Co-operators as any other class, and when this is fed by a dividend-making policy the same evils are likely to arise as do in the competitive world. It was to check this tendency that such a resolution was brought forward.

As far back as 1894 it had been decided that all matters relative to buildings should be considered by a Building Sub-committee before full responsibility was taken by the General Committee. Their duties consisted chiefly in arranging purchases of property and supervising alterations or fresh building. In the main, the system had been a satisfactory one. A little breeze, however, ruffled the smooth surface in August, 1899, in connection with the interior construction of Redfield shop, the plans for which were altered on the recommendation of the Manager after the Building Committee had set their approval upon them. As a consequence one of the Sub-Committee retired from the position. This caused criticism at the Monthly Meeting, and the Manager was not too kindly handled.

An interesting fact came to light in the examination of the title to the land upon which the Redfield Store was built, in that the rights were reserved for mining. There is a seam of coal lying some 500 yards below the surface of that spot, and it was at first thought not at all improbable that some day the Society might be called upon to yield up its visible property to permit others to search for hidden treasure. Upon mature consideration, however, the contingency appeared too remote and not sufficiently alarming to warrant any further notice.

In August, 1899, the scale of wages again came in for revision, and more generous treatment was meted out to the employés as a result.

At the Quarterly Meeting in September a far-sighted proposal was made by a member that 10s. per cent of the net profits should be devoted to propaganda purposes. It evidently occurred to this member that propaganda for trade purposes was more in the nature of advertisement than education, and should be provided for out of current trade profits rather than out of the educational fund. The members, however, did not think with him, and negatived the proposal, thereby missing an excellent opportunity of making a first step towards specialising Educational and Propaganda Departments.

Profits for the quarter ending October, 1899, were not up to the average, and some legal expenses and architect's fees had to be carried forward. Besides this, it was found impossible to maintain the full depreciation upon the stocks which had been customary. It was further pointed out by the President at the Quarterly Meeting that upon a reduced trade there had been a large excess of checks tendered, which was unduly burdening the profits of that quarter in providing the usual "divi." The policy adopted was the old one of expediency. The opposition had now become part of the government; but, for their own credit's sake, it would never have done to have come before the members with a reduction of dividend, and thus they, too, were caught by the exigencies of a commercial environment.

The following year was rich in progressive measures. Early in 1900 the question of setting up a Building Department was discussed, and, not without some opposition, more especially from members of the old school of thought, was carried into effect. One note which was sounded during the controversy will bear a brief reference here. The motive for establishing this department was the very laudable and quite Co-operative one of direct employment of labour in the Society's service. By the moderate section it was pointed out that

a large proportion of the members were, and always would be, directly interested in the building trade, and the tendency might be for pressure to be brought upon the executive with a view to making more work than was actually necessary for the accommodation of the trade. There was something in the contention, but, obviously, it was no real argument against setting up such a department. A similar position must be faced when the movement takes up the organisation of any industry involving the expenditure of labour in large proportion, and, in preparation for the future, the sooner experience is gained the better.

Such considerations call for firmness and intelligent anticipation of the Society's minimum requirements on the part of the executive; and for the members, emphasis must be laid upon the necessity for choosing broad-minded but thoroughly Co-operative administrators.

The position of foreman builder was advertised. One of the Committee, Mr. E. W. Bracey, applied, and was engaged.

This was the first definite step towards departmental management. For the guidance of all and sundry, it was laid down that the Building Department Manager should be under the control of the General Committee as expressed through the medium of the Building Sub-Committee. It was further enacted that the working hours of the Manager should be the usual trade hours, and that he must attend all Committee meetings. It is not stated whether these meetings would conform to the regulations as to usual trade hours, but one thing very evident from these stipulations is that the experiences of the past had not been lost either on the Committee or the prospective Manager. Further regulations stated that time sheets would show on which job work was being done, and the materials used; also that orders for materials should be signed by a member of the Building Committee. These practical arrangements indicate that the business was one in which some of the Committee, at all events, had experience.

The Building Department has survived many of its critics. The nature of its operations are such that it is difficult to estimate their profit or loss in terms of £ s. d. Besides repairs and renewals, alterations, and general jobbing work, this department has carried out some very effective building, designed its own plans, and completed the work in thorough workmanlike fashion. It is just possible that some of this work might have been done more cheaply by private contract, but only at the expense of labour or material, or both. Of this method the Society had some experience in connection with Bishopston Branch. When Co-operators do their own work they seek a qualitative, not a quantitative profit, and terms of money cannot give adequate expression to this standard.

The year 1900 witnessed a strike on the part of dock and riverside workers in Bristol. Many of these were members of the Bristol and District Society, and doubtless found the "bit of divi." they had laid by useful at this time. In case of exceptional need the Committee agreed to allow those members affected to draw goods against their share-holding; and the fact that there was but little response to this offer speaks volumes as to the sturdy independence of these people, and the power of Co-operation to encourage thrifty habits.

The advisability of disseminating general Co-operative knowledge, and the comparatively poor demand which existed for the official organ of the movement, was discussed at this time; and, as a mild speculation, it was decided to double the quantity usually ordered, and give the Manager instructions to push the sale. The increase appears to have been maintained, for this decision seems nowhere to have been countermanded.

The Sixty-third Quarterly Meeting, held in September, 1900, was chiefly remarkable for a discussion which was introduced that old-age pensions should be provided by the State. The basis upon which it was deemed advisable that these pensions should be granted was non-contributory, and to afford 5s. per week to every person who reached the age of sixty-five. In the light of recent

LOWER ASHLEY ROAD BRANCH.





VERRIER ROAD BRANCH, REDFIELD.

developments in this direction these facts are most interesting. The members agreed that the Society should be represented at a Conference which was being called to ventilate the matter, and further agreed to support the movement by a money grant, if required.

About this time, owing to the action of his superiors, one of the Committee found it advisable to resign his seat. The minute recording this action is very bald. It simply states the fact, that is all. There is a world of pathos in this simplicity; it seems to recognise that individual persecution is the price which has to be paid in order to win emancipation from the thraldom of capital. Time and again the movement has bestirred itself to right the wrongs done in this manner to individuals by powerful vested interests like railway companies; and even the Government has had to yield to the claim that employés do not sell themselves, body and soul, for wages, and that no employer shall dictate to a servant how wages or leisure time shall be spent. But those for whom this interest has been shown by the movement have been comparatively few; it is safe to say there have been many more who have quietly dropped out of the fighting line, though it is probable some—as, indeed, this one—are to be found handing up the ammunition, and doing a little less prominent, but still useful, work.



CHAPTER XXI.

MEANWHILE, in January and February, 1899, some important purchases of property were completed. The whole of the land and buildings fronting Lawrence Hill and extending along Leadhouse Road, also the Old Brewery alongside Ducie Road, came into the hands of the Society, the former at a cost of £997, and the latter, £1,900.

A proposal to limit the interest upon capital held by non-purchasing members to 2½ per cent came under consideration, but was negatived in March, 1899, by a large majority of the members; and, in view of the enormous sum which was at that time locked up in buildings, it would seem that in this they were wisely expedient.

Another resolution which caused some controversy at the time asked that there should be a spending qualification for Committee-men. Such notions savour of the inquisitorial, and were not likely to find much favour among Co-operators, who are very largely interested in the preservation of individual liberty.

Christmas of 1900 will be remembered in the grocery trade as a period of peculiar anxiety. The currant crops in Greece had failed, and other fruit was less plentiful than in most seasons. Quite naturally, the Greek farmer expected as large a return in value for the smaller quantity available as he had been accustomed to getting when the season was a normal one; this meant a largely-increased price, and those who had to sell currants to consumers had no easy task to settle in their minds as to whether the public would pay the extra cost, or whether they would do without the fruit. Co-operators, through their own C.W.S., invariably send to the growers for their supply, and on this occasion they paid the price. The trade, however, who had everything to gain and nothing to lose by waiting, deferred their purchases, meanwhile doing

their best to introduce substitutes for currants in the hope of pressing the Greeks to lower prices. In the end they were successful. Aided by competition among the Greek farmers themselves, these waiting tactics broke the market here, and there was a helter-skelter race on the part of holders to sell at the best possible price. The Greek farmer was thus ground between adverse climatic conditions and the unmoral trading conditions of the British public. Of course, there was a sudden drop in the retail prices, and those who had been "smart" were able to score off the folk who had been doing a straight business all the time. We feel this rather technical interlude is necessary, for the charge was made against the C.W.S. at one of the Monthly Meetings of the Society that the federation had acted as a link in a commercial ring. Never was a charge more unfounded; and it is passing strange that no one in that meeting rose to protest against such a slur upon the honour of the movement. If that were a fact every member present was implicated, and they acquiesced by their silence in their own dishonour. The ring, such as it was, had brought disaster to the grower; but it is no part of the Co-operative principle to fatten upon the losses of other folk; and the superficial criticism at that Monthly Meeting not only revealed a lack of knowledge, but a serious lack of Co-operative faith.

At the December Quarterly Meeting the question of employés attending the business meetings of the Society was brought forward. There was a strong feeling that their rights as workers should be fully preserved. For the time being the matter was shelved for the Committee to prepare and submit a scheme. In March, 1901, the Committee say that the only way to admit of this being done is to change the night of meeting. The members were not satisfied with this, but the new rules of the Bristol Society altered the closing time of the shops on Quarterly Meeting nights to 7 o'clock, that employé members might attend the meetings.

Yet another necessity arose to deal with the overlapping question. This time it was the Frampton Cotterell Society who asked for adjustment. In accordance with

former precedents the matter was closely looked into, a plan drawn up, and on February 26th, 1901, a mutual agreement was arrived at:—

1. That a boundary line be drawn between Patchway and Filton railway stations.

2. That the proposed line be diverted at a point in Stoke Lane as indicated by the City boundary stone, and carried in a straight line to the City boundary stone on the road to Hambrook.

3. That the line be drawn upon the course of the River Froom, and not at the sides thereof.

4. That from the bend of the road in Black Horse Lane a straight line be drawn crossing the Midland Railway, and including the junction with the lane to Shortwood Colliery and the Brick Works, the premises mentioned to be in the Bristol boundary.

5. That the road from the junction at the Colliery Lane to the main Bristol Road be considered in Bristol boundary.

6. That the main Bristol Road from road mentioned in Clause 5 to where it turns north towards Pucklechurch be considered in Bristol boundary, as well as the lane proceeding to the road leading to Abson, also Redford Lane.

7. That all properties abutting upon roads shown as within the boundary of either Society should be treated as within the boundary of the Society to which the road belongs.

These proposals were accepted by both Societies, and the agreement has been loyally observed ever since.

It is interesting to note that the village of Pucklechurch, where once flourished a Branch of a Bristol Society, now became included in the area of Frampton Cotterell.

Further negotiations were carried on in May, 1904, resulting in Frampton Cotterell Society agreeing to deliver twice weekly in the district of Patchway, Bristol and District setting forth their views in the following manner:—

The Committee is prepared to hand over all that district to the north of Gipsy Patch, Hayes, and Highwood Lanes. The boundary line to be altered to that effect. This will give your Society the whole of Patchway. Names and addresses of our members herewith, in order that you may visit them and explain the new boundary line with a view to their transferring their capital to your Society.

Early in 1901, too, the question arose as to the inadequacy of drapery supplies for members' require-

ments. The members at Bishopston Branch, who were doing an increasing trade in grocery and provisions, seeing that the Society had other premises near by, let to private traders, felt that better use might be made of them if a Drapery and Furnishing Department were formed for their convenience. A suggestion to that effect was made to the Committee, who replied that the shops were let on a seven years' agreement, the greater part of which had yet to run. The whole question of Central and Branch Drapery establishments was raised at the next Monthly Meeting, and a policy of stocking the Branch shops in preference to a large central warehouse seems to have been favoured. This policy has since been adhered to, though it must be confessed with but qualified approval ; the difficulty of keeping adequate stocks in small shops is almost unsurmountable in the drapery business, and it cannot be said that this branch of the Society's operations has met with support commensurate with the amount of labour and energy which has been expended upon it. Possibly this question of adequate stocks may have something to do with the matter.

Resolutions of no small import were brought before the Quarterly Meeting of March, 1901. In the first place, it was decided by a large majority that no application to fill any vacancy on the staff be entertained from members of the Committee until they had resigned therefrom six months.

This was evidently aimed at the appointments of General Manager and Building Department Manager, both of whom, it will be remembered, transferred their services straight from the Committee to the staff.

The question as to Committee's remuneration also came up for consideration, a resolution having been tabled by a member in the following terms:—

> That in view of the increased turnover of this Society, and corresponding responsibility of its Officers and Managers, the salaries of the Committee shall be raised to the sum of 2s. per attendance for the members, and 3s. for the Chairman,

with the result that a Committee was appointed to go into the matter and report. This Committee reported in

the following June, and their remarks were of an exceedingly interesting character. Such a comprehensive statement needs no further comment.

REPORT ON COMMITTEE'S SALARIES, SUBMITTED TO QUARTERLY MEETING HELD JUNE, 1901.

In accordance with the resolution passed at the last Quarterly Meeting the Special Committee appointed to consider the remuneration of the Committee of Management at its first meeting inquired into the duties and present remuneration, and found that there are held per quarter 19 General Committee Meetings and 13 Sub-Committee Meetings, for which they received 1s. per meeting, the Secretaries of the Sub-Committees 1s. per meeting extra; that the Committee receive 1s. each for attending Monthly Meetings of members, that if they go to the employés' outing they each receive their day's pay, 4s. 6d. each for stocktaking, and 1s. each as dividend payers, so that it is possible for each to earn £1. 18s. 6d. per quarter, and the Sub-Committee Secretaries £2. 11s. 6d.

The Special Committee then decided to obtain information from other Societies. Eight Societies were written to, and seven replied with the following information:—

	Genl.	Sub.	Pay.	Monthly.	Stocktaker.
Birmingham.....	19	6	30/–	Optional	3/6 each.
Blackpool	13	36	30/–	None.	£9. 19s. 6d. (12 Stores.)
Burt'n-on-Trent	13	Variable	40/–	None.	–/8 per hour.
Cainscross.....	13	2	13/–	None.	25/– whole work.
Coventry.....	26	13	26/–	None.	7/6 each.
Gloucester	26	...	37/6	No pay.	7/6 each dept.
Stroud	13	Variable	13/–	...	7/6 per day.

After carefully considering the foregoing information they unanimously passed the following resolution: "Seeing that the General Committee has not expressed any desire for an increase of payment this Special Committee do not recommend any alteration being made in the sums now paid."

This Committee also deprecates the idea that all services should be paid for, as the true principle of Co-operation should be still the Rochdale Pioneers' motto: "One and All," and not a mere money-grubbing machine. This Committee feels that if the General Committee's emoluments be increased the principle of payment could not logically be withheld from those who now voluntarily give their services to further the cause of Co-operation.

A. PRESTRIDGE, Sec., Special Committee.

Just about this time there appears to have been well-meant, though rather ill-considered, attempts to force the

hands of the Committee of Management in respect to the method of arranging prices. A notice of motion was received from two members which sought to instruct the Committee as to a maximum profit to be placed upon all goods sold. There was to be a uniform profit of 20 per cent upon everything; the one exception being coal, which was to be sold at 10 per cent on cost *ex* wharf, and 20 per cent if delivered. Obviously this was a question of management, and, as pointed out by the Co-operative Union when appealed to, even if carried, would have no binding effect upon the Committee, whose supremacy in all matters of management is adequately secured in the rules.

The party system was at this period in full swing, and much heat was engendered thereby at the Quarterly Meetings. Reasonable discussion was often rendered impossible through the unruly behaviour of some of the extremists of both sections. The position of Chairman was one calling for the exercise of much patience, and it is pleasing to find that these qualities were appreciated when found. After the September Quarterly Meeting of 1901 a letter was received by the Committee from a member, thanking the President for his coolness and calmness at the Quarterly Meeting under provoking circumstances.

Meanwhile some keen friend of labour discovered that the employés had to take stock on their half-holidays. This had but to be mentioned to be remedied. The time for stocktaking was accordingly altered from Wednesday to Tuesday. This matter settled, it was now claimed that the wages scale recently adopted was not a fair settlement of this question. The minimum for adult labour as laid down by the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employés had not yet been accepted by the Society, and on October 8th, 1901, the deliberations of the Committee were hastened towards that acceptance by the receipt of a letter from the Secretary of the local Branch, asking that, in accordance with Union conditions, the minimum of 24s. for males of 21 years, and 30s. for Storekeepers, should be observed. This decided the waverers, and

again a Sub-Committee was formed to revise the whole scale. The new scale came into operation in July, 1902.

Another matter in which the employés were closely concerned came in for consideration at the same time. Some difficulty had been experienced with the deliverers in respect to shortages, and it was decided in Committee that, in order to protect the Society against future deficiencies, each man should sign a form agreeing that same might be deducted from his wages. This decision was promptly challenged, and upon consultation with the Co-operative Union it was found that such action would be illegal. It was suggested, however, that a fund might be instituted in which the employé might be called upon to deposit certain moneys guaranteeing himself against such shortages. Thereupon it was decided that a system should be instituted whereby each employé should enter into a bond for faithful service. Details of this, and of the scales of wages adopted, will be found in Book III.

Occasionally valuable help may be rendered by timely suggestions from members to Committee, but we cannot commend in this respect the advice which was sent by one enthusiast in August, 1901, who—his suggestions were crude, certainly—unburdened himself with delightful candour. His proposals embodied the abolition of the bonus and education funds and the Manager's trap, letting out the building work on contract, and ceasing to post balance sheets. The last one was the sole redeeming feature of his omnibus proposal. Here was revealed the quality of mind with which Co-operation, alas! has only too often to deal—selfish, ignorant, jealous, and suspicious; that which was its only hope of salvation, the education fund, it spurned and sought to abolish. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the need for its retention than the suggestion of this wiseacre.

In 1902 the Society was approached by the Labour Electoral Association to throw their lot in with a general labour movement in Bristol, which was now being directed towards securing the election of working-men representatives to the City Council. Prominent labour leaders were permitted to attend the quarterly business meeting

to state their case. After a quarter's adjournment, the principle was accepted, but the full responsibility of this step was never faced by the Society.

The period under review was one of extreme difficulty, and the reader will need to be indulgent with this attempt to straighten out some of the confused issues which were raised between the years 1901 and 1904.*

From the time that Mr. Lloyd yielded up the President's for the Manager's chair the reformers gained ground. Quarter after quarter their nominees were elected to the Committee, till by 1902 they had sufficient influence on the Board to be a force to be reckoned with. Then came the tug-of-war; for two years a struggle marked by intense bitterness and almost personal spite ensued. Dissensions hatched in secret meetings were thrust forward in the Committee-room, and, through the medium of the Monthly Meetings, dragged out into the light of day to provide a bone of contention among the members. Hot words and indiscreet utterances from the platform often served to inflame the passions of both parties to the controversy. The fact that the personality of the Manager still made him an object of devotion for one side provided their opponents with a power to wound for which there was not retaliation available. There were, however, those in the Society who could not be of either party, and to whom these factions and disorders were a source of sincere regret and pain. To such it came almost as a shock to hear from a Committee-man at the Monthly Meeting in May, 1902, that of his colleagues two-thirds of them had no confidence in the Manager. Such a statement could scarcely inspire confidence in the Committee themselves. Matters were still further complicated in that the profits, which during 1901 had been good, the dividend reaching high-water mark—1s. 10d. for quarter ending October, 1901—during the whole of 1902 steadily declined, dividend for quarters ending July and October, 1902, dropping to 1s. 6d. Each side had its own explanation; the old party fastened on the want

* A reference to the general trade statistics will show that in spite of these controversies the period was one of continued commercial prosperity.

of practicability of their opponents, who retorted that the system of management in general, and the Manager in particular, were at the root of the matter. Obviously this latter had the element of extreme probability wrapped up in it. Members knew quite well that Mr. Lloyd was not a practical man, in the sense of having spent the whole of his career in the business of retail trade, and for some considerable time past there had been strong expressions of opinion favourable to departmental Managers, proposals for which were made in September, 1902. Complaints were brought about prices of goods in support of the contention that the Manager was unpractical. The minutes of the Committee which were read at the Monthly Meeting of members disclosed the fact that the Manager and Committee were frequently at variance, orders for goods being given against instructions, and letters being held back. So great was the resentment that a vote of censure was actually passed upon Mr. Lloyd by the Committee in September, and endorsed by the members at the following Monthly Meeting. The position was considerably aggravated by the strenuous efforts put forth by the old party to regain their former supremacy. Members were canvassed, and all kinds of wild statements made as to the Society's affairs. It was even said that the Society was on the verge of ruin, and could only be saved by returning certain individuals—strong supporters of the party, of course—to the Committee.

The relations between the Committee and Manager did not improve as time went on, and eventually Mr. Lloyd was relieved of the entire control for the bakery ; Mr. Crewe (the head baker) and Mr. Densley (the organising foreman) being made directly responsible to the Sub-Committee, the former to advise as to qualities and blends of flour, and the latter as to purchases and markets, as well as distribution of bread to members.

This move was undoubtedly resented by the friends of Mr. Lloyd, and towards the close of the quarter the old party rallied their forces for the purpose of definitely running candidates for the Committee. Four places would be vacant, three members retiring according to

rule, and a further unit to fill the place of Mr. Carter. Of the three retiring Committee, one, Mr. Spiller, was felt to be safe, but the other two, Mesdames Fidkin and Greenland, it was thought desirable to displace. With the utmost secrecy the movement was organised, and a circular reading as follows "judiciously" distributed:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

There will be four vacancies in the Committee to fill at the next Quarterly Meeting on December 13th, and we very earnestly feel that the future prospects and well-being of the Society depend on the policy adopted by those elected to fill those vacancies.

For some time past, as evidenced at the Monthly Meetings of members, considerable friction has existed between those who should be working together for the Society's good. If this is allowed to continue the success of the Society, and the benefits that should result therefrom, will be greatly diminished. It is our desire that the stability and influence of the Society should be increased, rather than weakened by internal strife.

We, therefore, appeal to you to give us your support, by your vote, in arresting what appears to us a downward movement, and a still further lowering of the dividend. With proper management, the increasing turnover of the Society warrants a higher dividend, and, if elected, we would endeavour to bring this about.

Yours fraternally,

JAMES SPILLER, 45, Triangle, West Clifton.
Mrs. SHEPPARD, 120, York Road, Montpelier, Bristol.
A. CUMMINGS, 6, Carlile Road, Greenbank.
W. J. CROSS, 81, Barrow Road, Barton Hill.

N.B.—The voting takes place by ballot, on Saturday, December 13th, at the Shepherds' Hall, Old Market Street, from 12 noon to 8 p.m. It will be necessary to show your Pass Book to the Presiding Officer.

This appeal was signed by the four candidates, and on the back was a long list of names of members in support, finishing up with the remark, "You have four votes; give one to each candidate." These tactics had the desired effect. All four of the selected candidates were elected, and once more the balance of power seemed to shift away from the reformers. But not for long. Their indignant protests against this method of influencing votes were raised at the Monthly Meetings, not altogether fruitlessly. Members began to feel they had been tricked, and their ardour for the old party sensibly declined. In connection with this poll another somewhat

serious controversy arose. The Staple Hill Educational Council, upon the plea that attendance at Quarterly Meetings was educational, paid, out of their proportion of the education grant, the tram fares of those who would attend the meeting. Many scathing comments were made upon this broad interpretation of education, and the matter was referred to the Finance Committee to deal with.

Other important matters were dealt with at this Quarterly Meeting in December, 1902. It was ruled that no members should be allowed to vote at the Society's meetings who had not fully paid up their shares. The principle of Branch extension was commended to the Committee, and for the first time a recommendation was put forward to grant certain sums to local medical charities.

A special rule was passed embodying a principle which democratic bodies have ever been anxious to preserve. It aimed at killing any tendency towards favouritism amongst those entrusted with the Society's affairs, and the rule was couched in the following terms:—

That no person shall be qualified to act as a member of the Committee of this Society, or to be elected as President thereof, if such person has any relative of any of the following degrees in the Society's employ, viz.: son or grandson, daughter or granddaughter, father, mother, brother, or sister, uncle or aunt, nephew, niece, or cousin; or any one of the above-named degrees with the word "step" prefixed, or the words "in-law" added to, in order to describe the relationships more correctly. Also that members who are at present serving on the Committee and are affected by this resolution to retire as their term of office expires.

This was passed with great unanimity.

At the same meeting it was decided to guarantee £100 towards the defence fund which was being raised by the Co-operative Union in connection with the boycott of Co-operators.

Last, but by no means least, the question of voting in districts was raised, and the principle approved by a large majority. This proposal had been before the Society since June, 1901, but, notwithstanding its acceptance now, it had to stand aside for a long time yet before being put into actual operation.

This meeting, and the circumstances leading up to the business transacted thereat, sounded the knell of the old party as the framers of a definite policy. It is true some of their adherents continued to shout for "divi." at the meetings, and their representatives on the Committee sought to concentrate attention to the purely commercial interests of the Society. Strangely enough it was from one of them that the proposal came to have the Society's assets valued. This proves that, at any rate, their faith was sound, for if anything was wanting to complete their discomfiture it was to be found in the result of that valuation; it was the consummation of their policy—how near it came to a disastrous ending has already been dealt with elsewhere; but this meeting, which apparently registered a triumph for their policy, acted as a spur to the other side, who speedily regained the ground which had been lost. For ten months longer the feud continued, but in October, 1903, a climax was reached. On the 20th of that month, after a brief discussion among the Committee, the principle of departmental management was definitely decided upon. During the same week exception was taken to the Manager disobeying instructions respecting the banking of money, which, instead of always doing personally, he had delegated to another. Further, exception was taken to his being away from the premises often, leaving no word as to his whereabouts. Accordingly, a resolution was passed that time books should be kept in both Secretary's and Manager's office, wherein they and their staff might enter their time in and out, both the Secretary and the Manager to give the nature of the business that called them out beyond their usual time.

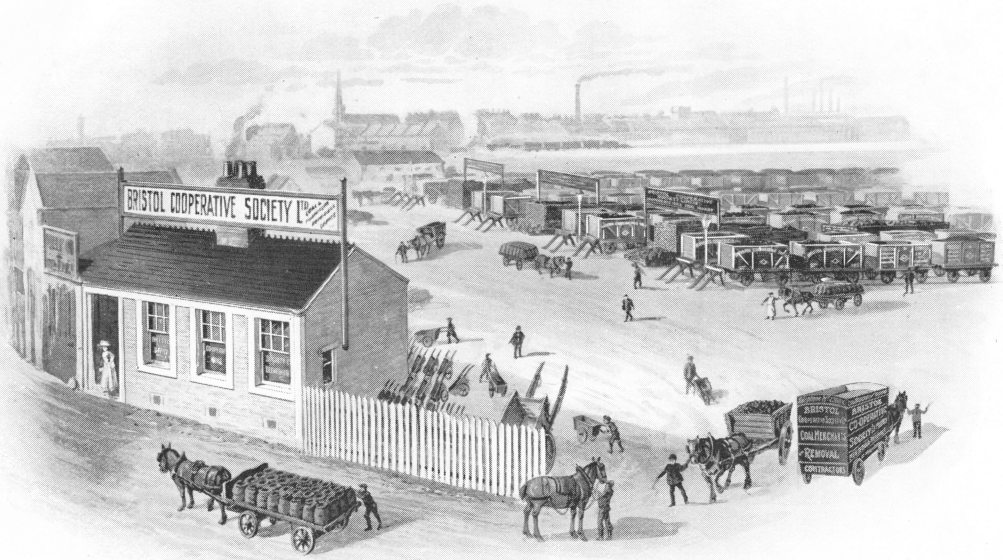
On October 29th Mr. Lloyd reported that owing to his having to be out so many times in a day, and having to move quickly, he could not undertake to keep a time book. Upon the Committee insisting that this should be done the Manager tendered his resignation in the following terms, which was accepted:—

In consequence of the procedure adopted by the Committee, and the great lack of support afforded me by them, I feel that I

can no longer continue to occupy my present position with advantage to the Society or with satisfaction to myself. I, therefore, beg to give the usual notice to leave the Society's employ.

The usual notice was interpreted by mutual consent to mean a fortnight, and the Committee proceeded forthwith, in pursuance of the policy agreed upon, to advertise for Managers to supervise the Grocery and Provision, Greengrocery, and Coal Departments.

Meanwhile, another important resignation had taken effect. In September, 1902, Mr. John Brown, who had been in somewhat indifferent health for a long time past, yielded up the Presidency. Mr. Brown's connection with the Society had been a long and honourable one. Co-opted to the Committee at the opening of the first Branch in Hotwells, he had served continuously ever since, being elected President upon Mr. Lloyd being appointed Manager. These two had been close personal friends; and when Mr. Lloyd's action as Manager began to receive unfavourable criticism the position of Mr. Brown was by no means an enviable one, especially as his own sense of right placed him in opposition to his friend. Mr. Brown had a thorough belief in the principles of the movement, and had made many personal sacrifices for his belief in the days when to be a Co-operator was to be depreciated rather than appreciated. A man of easy temperament, he was harassed considerably by the storms of controversy which ever and anon broke over the Society during his term of Presidency, and it must have been with a feeling of relief that he handed the reins to Mr. H. A. Carter, who was unanimously chosen to succeed him. Mr. Carter was one of the original five pioneers. His four erstwhile colleagues from various causes had dropped out of the front rank; he alone remained, and now, at a most vexing stage, stepped forth to take supreme command. His singleness of aim and unassuming energy had won for him the esteem and respect of his fellow-Committee-men, and his moderation and strong common-sense marked him as the fittest to guide the destinies of the Society through what was felt by most to be a critical period.



COAL WHARF, LAWRENCE HILL.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE question of issuing circulars referred to in the previous chapter was not permitted to rest, notwithstanding that the obnoxious individuals had been replaced on the Committee by those of a different shade of opinion. A motion was brought forward at a Special General Meeting, which was adjourned from the Quarterly Meeting in March, 1903—

That no member or members shall issue or cause to be issued any literature or appeals for support, either by circular or advertisement, in favour of any person or persons seeking to be elected to any office in connection with the Society; neither shall there be any personal canvassing on the part of the candidates on their own behalf. Any person or persons who may be elected, in whose favour this rule has been infringed, shall be disqualified, and the vacancy thus created be filled by the candidate or candidates receiving the next highest number of votes.

This was enthusiastically received, and passed by a large majority. The sentiment was excellent, but the method was almost grotesque, and when the meeting was over sober reflection showed the futility of the action taken. The resolution was not allowed to pass without protest. Letters were sent by members to the Registrar in one case, pointing out that a member had voted whose share was not paid up, and in another enclosing a series of objections drawn up as follows:—

1. That it was passed by the members without due and careful consideration.

2. That any member objecting to or having a grudge against a candidate could under this rule disqualify him from sitting on the Committee.

3. That it was a gross interference with the liberties and freedom of the member.

4. That it will lead to confusion, and bring about a deadlock in the affairs of the Society.

According to the phrasing of section 2 it does appear that the framers of these pleas—and there were thirty-seven

signatures—left the women entirely out of their calculations, notwithstanding that two were serving on the Committee at the time. The rule was permitted to become a dead letter. Whether the protests had the desired effect there is no adequate evidence to show, but the objections foreshadowed in clauses 1 and 2 must have had some influence. Mention was made of these objections at the meeting, but feeling was running too high to permit of reasonable counsels prevailing at the time.

At this same meeting, in accordance with the resolution passed the previous quarter, the Committee brought forward their recommendations with regard to district voting. But in the meantime a revulsion of feeling had taken place. The circularising of members had indicated the possibility of caucuses being formed, and the principle was objected to upon the ground that too much power would be given into the hands of interested parties to work the elections. Employés were specially referred to, and by those, too, who had been foremost in promoting improved conditions. Thus the position was lost, and never again won in the Bristol and District Society. The experiment was tried in March, 1906, by the newly-formed Bristol Society; and, although the results were not wholly encouraging, since that time members have been given the opportunity of recording their votes at the Branches the night before Quarterly Meetings, and, where this privilege is not exercised, it is still open to the member to perform that duty just prior to the meeting itself.

A curious and somewhat interesting controversy arose during 1901 over a nomination in which one of the Committee was interested. The nomination had been made when the sum in question was something less than £100, but by the time the nominator died the amount had increased to £134. 18s. A counter claim was made on behalf of the next-of-kin, and it was then discovered that according to the Act of 1893 nominations were limited, inoperative, and invalid if the amount involved was over £100—that is, a member might nominate his or her shares at any time during membership, but if the amount

exceeded £100 at death the nomination could not be acted upon. Attempts were made to arrange the matter between the parties interested, but to no purpose, and the nominee had to suffer the loss of the whole amount. The matter was not finally settled till the spring of 1902, the Committee-man interested having in the meantime withdrawn from the Board.

We must hark back to the year 1900, in order that some notice may be drawn to the development of the business itself. There can be no doubt that, in spite of all the turmoil and strife of parties, good work was being done, and, on the whole, notwithstanding some regrettable incidents, the net result was to strengthen the Society. The business developed to a remarkable degree. No less than eight Branches were opened in four years, a Greengrocery Department was organised, Furnishing and Clothing Departments were added at the Central, and Drapery Departments at three Branches.

First in order of date was the opening of Redfield Branch. Although fairly near to the Central, the operations of this Branch had but little appreciable effect upon the trade done thereat. Its sure success was evidenced at the outset of its career, and subsequent events have in no way falsified those early expectations.

Reference has already been made to the purchase of the land, and the building of the Store. This latter was carried out by the Building Department, and the formal opening took place on November 4th, 1899, under most favourable conditions.

Next was the establishment of a Branch at Cotham. During the summer of 1900 premises were rented at 2, Highbury Place, Cotham, and for three years this Branch was continued on these premises. Towards the end of 1903, however, the members in the district became impatient. The Society was erecting up-to-date premises in every direction but theirs. Pressure was brought to bear upon the Committee, who, in January, 1904, were able to report that "land had been purchased, and building operations might shortly be expected." The site,

which is that now occupied by the Cotham Branch—a most imposing one—at the junction of five ways, was, at the time of purchase, covered by an old mansion—Tancrede House; and, although of no use to the Society, this property had to be purchased as well, and the price paid seemed exorbitant. Moreover, the land was subject to a ground rent, and after the negotiations for purchase had been completed it was found that the ground landlord objected to shops being placed upon the site. This point being settled, a fresh consideration arose in respect to "ancient lights" from the owner of the property opposite. After some considerable negotiation these matters were settled by purchase. The ground rent was bought at thirty-five years' purchase, and a sufficient price paid for the house whose light might probably be obstructed. These difficulties gave opportunity for adverse criticisms, and a resolution was placed upon the agenda for Quarterly Meeting of June, 1904—

(*a*) That in view of the unsatisfactory circumstances surrounding the property lately purchased by the Society at Kingsdown, a small Committee of members be appointed by this meeting to report thereon.

(*b*) That a small Committee of members be appointed to consider the desirability or otherwise of adopting the rule of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, ensuring future purchases of land or buildings being first submitted to the members for confirmation before such purchases are completed.

These resolutions were framed by a master mind, being no less a person than our friend Mr. Lloyd, who had, by this time, relinquished the management. They appear to have been reasonable requests enough, but they were refused, probably more from feelings of irritation against the mover than the logic of the case. Eventually the new Branch was erected by the Society's Building Department, and was opened with a grand flourish on May 24th, 1905. A procession of the Society's vehicles paraded the district and caused no little discussion and surprise in the neighbourhood.

It is interesting to note that the name "Cotham Branch" was definitely fixed by Committee's resolution

in May, 1905. Up till that time various names had been used, Kingsdown, Horfield Road, and Tancrede House being among them.

The next development had connected with it considerations of more than mere local significance, and, with the splendid help afforded by the Women's Co-operative Guild, a novel experiment was made. For some few years a special topic at Guild meetings had been how to bring the benefits of Co-operation within reach of the very poor, and the discussions upon this matter had revealed many hitherto unsuspected barriers which effectually told against the individual existing on or below the poverty line, and placed the movement beyond his grasp. The effect of this agitation upon the Bristol and District Society manifested itself in the following manner. In March, 1901, at a Monthly Meeting, the Chairman, in addition to foreshadowing developments at the Central and Newfoundland Road, referred to the part that Bristol and District Society intended to take in trying to remedy this state of things in the following terms:—

> Your Committee have decided to extend the benefits of Co-operation to the poor in the districts of the Dings and St. Philips, as they feel it their bounden duty to give the inhabitants of this district the same privilege as we ourselves enjoy of belonging to the Co-operative movement.

It is more than probable that the presence of two of the Women's Guild upon the Management Committee did something to press this sense of duty to its logical conclusion.

Towards the close of the year premises were obtained in Kingsland Road, and business started. The first week sales were but £15, and the first quarter's trading £181. 14s. 7d., resulting in a loss of £14. 2s. 10d. This somewhat inglorious start was soon recompensed by a series of successes. Yet the Store did not seem to be fulfilling the object of its being; it did not reach the class for whom it was ostensibly brought into existence, and, although seldom expressed, it was felt by those who were

enthusiastic in the matter that, notwithstanding the commercial result, the Co-operative results were disappointing. Matters remained thus till the autumn of 1905, when the Women's Co-operative Guild, to celebrate their majority, made this particular district the object of special propaganda, with a view to resuscitating the ideal which prompted the opening of the Branch. For four months active propaganda was carried on, and for a further twelve months supplementary efforts were sustained, but the results do not appear to have been altogether commensurate with the labour expended. A more detailed account of this experiment appears in the chapter dealing with the Women's Guild, to which all honour is due for a magnificent labour of love.

Meanwhile, both Bishopston and Newfoundland Road Stores were beginning to feel the pressure of trade from their outlying districts an inconvenience, and steps were taken to establish a Branch midway between these two centres. The Lower Ashley Road was selected as the best shopping neighbourhood; and, towards the close of 1901, a couple of houses, Nos. 9 and 11, were bought, and operations entered upon immediately to convert them into shops. The alterations were pushed forward, and on March 12th, 1902, the premises were opened for business, the occasion being marked by a demonstration in the streets, and a public tea in the evening at St. Agnes' Schoolrooms. The cost of this Branch, when completed, amounted, in round figures, to £1,500.

As before indicated, the opening of this Branch was expected to relieve both Bishopston and Newfoundland Road. It did so for a few weeks, and then at both places the pressure became as heavy as before. For the time being, Bishopston, being the largest shop, had to stand aside, but Newfoundland Road could not long be delayed, and as soon as the rush of Christmas trade was over the Committee tackled the matter. It was decided to extend the premises. A shop was temporarily rented, and the whole of the Society's property handed over to the Building Department, to whom was entrusted the work of rearranging the accommodation. The cost was estimated

to be about £300, but eventually ran into £426, causing no little amount of adverse criticism from the members. Complaints were made that the material was poor, and that the Works Manager was incompetent; but there is reason to believe that these criticisms were not altogether just, for one member, a practical man in building, expressed himself strongly in favour both of Manager and his selection of material. By the middle of the year these alterations and additions were complete, and the Committee were able to say in their report for the quarter ending July 28th, 1903:—

> NEWFOUNDLAND ROAD.—The new premises are now open, and complete the chain of our uniformly well-ventilated, lofty, and imposing Branches.

Evidently referring to Lower Ashley Road, Newfoundland Road, Greenbank, and Redfield.

In view of the activity which had been manifested in this direction, it would appear to have been a little unkind to press the Committee further; but it is an indication that the members' feelings were being interpreted aright in that, so far as the principle went, they assented to a proposition which was brought before them in January, 1903, by a once prominent official, to the effect—

> That a Branch should be established at Kingswood, and, to further extend the business of the Society, that Branches should be established in suitable districts as speedily as possible.

Kingswood had been allowed to lapse in favour of more pressing needs. A year previous to this the question of a Branch among the boot operatives at Kingswood had been discussed and agreed to; the people in the district were talking about the matter, and a couple of tradesmen actually offered to sell their businesses to the Society, an offer which, it is needless to say, was declined with thanks. Kingswood was to have a Branch, but not yet. Two years passed, and on December 15th, 1904, the Committee received a petition from members living in the Kingswood district for a Store to be placed among them. It was immediately resolved to look for premises. In less than a

week these had been found in High Street, one of two shops, with land attached, to be purchased at £580. It was agreed to pay a deposit subject to solicitor's approval. But inspection of the deeds revealed that the accommodation of the two shops was such as could not be divided, and after further negotiations it was resolved to purchase the whole block. This was concluded on January 25th, 1905, £1,300 being paid for the whole. The Branch was opened with a procession of the Society's rolling stock, accompanied by a brass band, on the afternoon of March 22nd, 1905, a tea and public meeting being held in the evening.

The Committee, it is true, would not be hustled, but they kept a keen outlook upon the property market, for the policy of buying or building their own premises was that which they intended to pursue. In July, 1903, they were negotiating for four plots of land, Nos. 613, 615, 617, and 619, Fishponds Road, but, after bidding £1,700 and being refused, the vendor asking £2,100, they withdrew from the negotiation. Fishponds members continued to press, and accordingly an advertisement was inserted in the local paper asking for offers of land or property. Early in 1904 a piece of land with frontage to the main road was offered, and the Society closed at £675. Plans were put in hand for two thoroughly up-to-date shops, to include drapery and kindred trades, with a hall over the whole building, but this was not ready for business before October, 1905. In the meantime other important developments had taken place, and in order to complete the story of Branch extension it will perhaps be well to deal with these.

Next in order came No. 10 Branch in Clouds Hill Road, St. George. Here a shop was secured for five years, with option to purchase at £600. This was in April, 1904. A public meeting was held in the Drill Hall to give the Branch a good send-off, at which the utmost enthusiasm was shown.

A few months later the Committee were looking out for a shop at Whitehall. This was found, leased for

three years at £15 per year, and business was begun on December 5th, 1904. In less than three months a piece of land in the neighbourhood was secured for £104, whereon, at a cost of £806, the erection of a substantial building was in due course proceeded with.

Meanwhile the trade at Bishopston was overtaxing both the accommodation and the staff, and the question arose as to where another Branch in the district should be put. Westbury, Filton, and Ashley Down were each suggested in turn, and excellent reasons given for developing in either area. Eventually, however, corner premises in Downend Road were offered, and, by a bare majority, the Committee decided to rent with a view to subsequent purchase. The matter was discussed rather warmly at the Monthly Meeting, members living in that district nearest to Bishopston Branch opposing the step, and those living in other neighbourhoods supporting the Committee. The non-residents triumphed, and No. 12 Branch was placed at Downend Road. The agreement was signed for a five years' lease at £27 per year, with option of purchase at £500. The Store was opened on February 22nd, 1904, and a public meeting in the Ashley Down Council Schools on March 8th, 1905, was held to celebrate the event. Success did not come all at once, but it did come, and it is safe to say the people of the district have benefited from the movement having been brought to them. They have to thank the little knot of stalwarts who resisted the suggestion to put the Horfield Branch in the main thoroughfare that they have thus benefited.

The opening of Kingswood Branch on March 22nd, 1905, brought the total of the Society's establishments to thirteen. Three months later the two shops of the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society were added to the list, the members having agreed to amalgamate, including Drapery and Boot Departments, Bakery, and Coal, all of which businesses had been undertaken by the old Society. The details concerning this amalgamation will be dealt with elsewhere. Reference is made to it here to complete the story of Branch development, the record of which for

these four years is probably unprecedented in the history of any Society.

Simultaneously with these extensive proceedings others were taking place within the Society's existing area of operations. Coal wharves were opened at Montpelier and Fishponds, though not without considerable difficulty so far as the railway companies were concerned. An attempt to departmentalise greengrocery was made, but had to be abandoned. The history of that attempt is instructive. Briefly told, it happened thus. During the summer of 1901, Mr. Lloyd (General Manager) experimented by sending round a lurry packed with greengrocery, selling from door to door. The experiment was confined to Lawrence Hill district, and, had it stopped at that, might have proved successful. But members in other districts began to clamour for equal facilities. In October of that year a horse and lurry were bought specially for this round business, as it appeared likely the trade would develop. It did, but never satisfactorily as regards profit. Upon Mr. Lloyd's resignation a practical greengrocer was placed in charge of the department, and trade returns mounted up; but the calls which were made upon the department in respect to equal treatment of members in delivery of goods could never be satisfactorily met. Moreover, the expenses were always so heavy as to preclude the possibility of making this a paying department, when compared upon an equal basis with others; so, after much discussion upon a heavy loss for the quarter ending July, 1905, the Committee were empowered to close the department as such, and instructed to work the greengrocery, so far as it was possible, through the Grocery Department. One fact alone will show how handicapped the officials were in dealing with this department, in that the members laid it down that the maximum hours worked were to be 51 hours per week.

It is only fair to add that but for its ideal conditions of labour the Society could have succeeded in this, as in other businesses, but they had to meet competitors to whom interest upon capital, depreciation of fixed and rolling stock, reasonable hours of labour, and fair wages

were matters for only secondary consideration, and the system of departmentalising accounts naturally told against the profitable working of a department faced with such conditions in selling at customary retail prices. The losses, which, after all, were largely paper losses, were therefore permitted to outweigh the advantages, from a general Co-operative point of view, of regulating the hours and conditions of labour in a greatly overworked branch of distribution.

On May 26th, 1903, the Society commenced to blend and pack self-raising flour. Prior to this the C.W.S. had been responsible for the production of the bulk of its output in this direction, but the business was growing, and it was thought well to transfer the trade to the supervision of its own Committee. Thus the Packing Department started; many goods besides self-raising flour are now put up by the Society in their own packages, the departments being worked as an adjunct to the Grocery.

Other developments included the stocking of drapery at Bishopston and Greenbank in the early part of 1902, and at St. George's Road towards the close of 1903; also the departmentalising of Boots and Shoes, Clothing and Men's Hosiery, and Furniture and Hardware, the latter under the title of the Furnishing Department, at the Central premises in 1902.

As already indicated, these 4½ years were years of unprecedented prosperity, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the controversies then proceeding had something to do with this prosperity, for they concentrated the attention of a large body of propagandists upon the internal working of the Society, and, in doing so, secured their interest also. Moreover, well-sustained criticism necessitated a close supervision on the part of the Committee, which was secured by regular meetings of Sub-Committees. There were Sub-Committees for Grocery, Bakery, Drapery (including Boots, Clothing, and Furnishing), Building, and at a later date for Office affairs. It indicates what an impression this elaboration of Sub-Committee work had upon the lay mind that the

Office Sub-Committee was established at the bidding of a newly-elected member of the Committee because of a request from the Manager for clerical assistance involving the expenditure of 12s. per week. It is evident that the Committee had a high sense of the responsibility resting upon them, and in their several departments did what they could to master the intricacies of the trade. That they made some mistakes it would only be human to expect, but that they secured a grip upon the essentials there can be no doubt. What trader, for instance, would boldly advertise to his customers that he could not recommend certain of his stock lines? But this the Committee did in September, 1902. Acting on the advice of the Boot Sub-Committee, the General Committee decided to mark certain of the cheap and nasty wares "not recommended by the Committee." It may be that it was the discarding of this unsavoury stock which led to the appointment of a practical man for the department. The decision was made about the same time.

One hears it said that "companies have neither a body to kick nor a soul to ——." This sentence may be true where the outlook is competitive; it certainly is not where the objective is Co-operation, as the matter referred to above clearly shows. Another incident which took place in July, 1903, will serve to show the spirit which actuated the Committee and members at the time. The tenant of the Society's premises at 95, St. George's Road, upon giving up tenancy, was found to be in very poor circumstances. A deputation from the Committee waited upon her and arranged to buy her fixtures for the sum of £5, intimating at the same time that they had no use for them, and that she was welcome to do what she liked with them. Other actions—"trifles light as air" maybe in themselves, but fraught with great possibilities—are recorded in bald fashion in the minute books of the period. They are indicative of a new spirit, a spirit of real comradeship, which was eventually to exhibit itself in the usual Co-operative manner—resolutions to establish a definite method of procedure in dealing with cases of distress. This must be dealt with in the next chapter.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Cotham Branch—	£	£	£
1900	1447	157	108
1901	4965	504	537
1902	6518	579	710
1903	7365	622	758
1904	8932	821	005
1905 (3 Quarters)	7535	760	624
Redfield Branch—			
1900	4310	417	284
1901	5628	529	480
1902	7879	670	692
1903	9062	756	789
1904	10188	893	999
1905 (3 Quarters)	7487	730	394
Ashley Road Branch—			
1902 (3 Quarters)	3846	423	310
1903	6451	695	527
1904	7232	794	651
1905 (3 Quarters)	5942	636	400
Bristol and District Kingsland Rd. Branch—			
1902	1779	227	73
1903	2541	296	177
1904	3079	316	301
1905 (3 Quarters)	2563	260	167
Clouds Hill Branch—			
1904 (2 Quarters)	2223	237	217
1905 (3 Quarters)	2883	330	207
Kingswood Branch—			
1905 (3 Quarters)	1035	186	*49
Downend Road—			
1905 (3 Quarters)	1156	132	75
Whitehall Branch—			
1905 (3 Quarters)	1507	193	90

* Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Year Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Avonmouth and Shirehampton Branch—	£	£	£
1905 (2 Quarters)	3526	559	*6
Bristol and Dist. Packing, Greengrocery, and Furnishing—			
1904, Packing	585	55	17
1905 ,, (3 Quarters) .	2313	205	130
1902, Greengrocery.....	336	98	1
1903 ,, ...	2743	770	69
1904 ,, ...	5682	1436	87
1905 ,, (3 Qrs.)...	5018	1161	248
1902, Furnishing	408	83	63
1903 ,, ...	851	195	74
1904 ,, ...	922	239	70
1905 ,, (3 Qrs.).....	983	171	40

* Loss.



WESTBURY BRANCH.





DOWNEND ROAD BRANCH.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DURING 1903, Reform was the watchword. At the June Quarterly Meeting it was decided to appoint a Special Committee to revise the rules of the Society. At the same meeting a far-sighted individual suggested that the Society's audit of accounts should be in the hands of a chartered accountant. Curiously enough, Mr. G. Ford, who was elected at that meeting, happened to be a qualified man, thus there was no need for such a resolution to be passed, and it was dropped.

The principle of departmental management was adopted by the Committee on October 20th, 1903, by a vote of seven to four. On November 7th appointments were made in respect to this decision, Miss Grevell being placed in charge of Drapery; Mr. Deans, of Boots; Mr. Davis, of Boot Repairs; and Mr. Balkwill, of Tailoring and Ready-mades; while Mr. Cockbaine (a Committee-man from Bedminster) secured the post of Coal Department Manager. On November 20th Mr. Whitehead, from the Clay Cross Society, was entrusted with the charge of the Grocery and Provisions Department. Mr. Whitehead came to Bristol with many years of Co-operative experience to his credit and the very best of Co-operative associations, for his brother had been for some years Assistant Secretary of the Co-operative Union. He quickly adapted himself to his new surroundings, and brought to the position a sympathy for the claims of labour which, to say the least, had not been very conspicuous in previous Managers. He entered upon his duties at a somewhat sensational time, for there were many questions under discussion, but chief of all, only four days before his appointment, the question of amalgamation with Bedminster Society had been brought

into the arena of practical politics. During the negotiations which proceeded thenceforward great tact and forbearance were required both on the part of Mr. Whitehead, of Bristol and District, and Mr. Rimmington, of Bedminster, and both came out of the ordeal with honour to themselves.

It was on November 16th, 1903, that Mr W. J. Petherick intimated to his colleagues on the Committee that at the December Quarterly Meeting he would give notice of the following motion:—

> That, believing it to be to the best interest of Co-operation in Bristol that there should be only one Society, this meeting authorises the General Committee to go into the question of amalgamation with the Bedminster Society, and report at the next Quarterly Meeting, with a view to that object.

It is not intended that the story of these negotiations should be told just here; that will be more appropriate in another place. But it is well to interrupt the thread of our general remarks to say something of the man who introduced this epoch-making proposal. It is significant to note, first of all, that although this desirable union had been spoken of for years by many members of both Societies, the matter was not seriously taken up by the Bristol and District Society before this resolution was tabled. There are some men who have an almost sure instinct for the right moment to act. Mr. Petherick was one of these, and this was only one of many opportunities he had grasped. His connection with the Society dates back to the early days, and throughout the whole period he had been one of the foremost in pushing the Co-operative cause. He first took office as Auditor in 1889, and was offered the Secretaryship in 1890, which honour he refused. He was returned to the Committee in 1898, when the new party was struggling to assert its ideals in the Society. The strenuous qualities of Mr. Petherick have been exerted to secure the dominance of that party. It was he who proposed the resumption of the Monthly Meetings and the reading of Committee minutes. Right through his career he has fought for thoroughly open relations between Committee and members, not

infrequently being led into fierce denunciations of his opponents by his very earnest vigour. Unquestionably his influence upon the progress of the movement in Bristol has been very great, but this proposal to amalgamate, brought forward just at this juncture, is a tribute, not only to the man's earnestness, but his intuitive sense of the practical. It entitles him to the honour, among members of the old Bristol and District Society at least, of being regarded as *the* pioneer of the Bristol Co-operative Society. Mr. Petherick has represented the Society at conferences in the South-Western, also in the Western Section of the Co-operative Union, and in 1904 was nominated for a seat on the Western Sectional Board, but was unsuccessful in his candidature.

This question of amalgamation had the effect of hanging up those proposals which might have been embodied in the new rules. For the time being the Rules Revision Committee stayed their investigations.

In the balance sheet for the quarter ending January 26th, 1904, appears an extraordinary recommendation by the Committee to grant £20 to the family of the late Mr. Hendy, formerly a member of the Board, who died under distressing circumstances. Mr. Hendy had for some years been an earnest worker, more especially in connection with the propaganda and educational bodies, and was well appreciated by the members. This was evidenced at the Quarterly Meeting in March, when an amendment, moved and seconded from the body of the hall, raising the amount to £50, was carried by an enthusiastic majority. Dissentients there were, of course, some of whom gave notice that they would move at the next Quarterly Meeting that the motion should be rescinded. This opposition, however, was eventually withdrawn. One can quite understand the feeling of these objectors; it was not that they were hard of heart, nor that they were unsympathetic. They perceived that the whole trend of the Society's policy for the past few years had been towards realising a sense of fraternity, but, like the partners of Robert Owen at Lanark, as business men, they

were not disposed to deplete the profits of the Store by subscribing to such philanthropy. Luckily, the bulk of members who attended the meeting felt otherwise, and in the following quarter the Committee, inspired by their Chairman (Mr. H. A. Carter), gave further proof of the faith which was in them by recommending that a contingency fund be formed for the purpose of relieving cases of distress among the members. This was passed by the members. This resolution crystallised into something practical at the Quarterly Meeting on December 10th, 1904. The Committee had recommended that £50 be set aside for the purpose, and that a Committee of six should be appointed to administer the fund. Again the members rose superior to the occasion, and unanimously resolved that the amount should be increased to £100. A Committee was appointed, and by March it was stated that £69. 19s. 10d. had already been disposed of to needy members. At the following Quarterly Meeting a further recommendation was made—

That 10 per cent of the net profits be set aside each quarter to form a contingency fund, and that a Committee, consisting of three members and three of the General Committee, be appointed to consider the administration of this fund, and report thereon at next Quarterly Meeting.

The precedent which was made in the case of Mr. Hendy was followed when Mr. Densley (one of the foremen in the bakery) died. The Quarterly Meeting in June, 1905, voted a sum of £20 to his family, who were left in distress. The proposal, which was accepted, to form a contingency fund doubtless emanated from a desire to deal with cases such as this, but since that date no such grants have been made, but nearly £200 has been expended upon directly relieving the distress of needy members. In this way Co-operators of the twentieth century join hands with the fraternities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and redeem the Store from the stigma which social well-being accords to cold, calculating commercialism.

During the whole of 1904 and 1905 the amalgamation question filled the minds of all, but this did not prevent

suggestions of a novel character being put forward. Of such was a proposal to start growing produce on the outskirts of Bristol to supply the Greengrocery Department, and others to open up milk rounds, and to embark in the butchery business. These proposals were negatived. The risks which would be entailed, it was considered, were too great to justify the steps being taken.

The growing influence of trade unionism made itself felt in a very practical manner. On March 29th, 1904, in response to a request from the employés themselves, the Committee passed a resolution that "no employé be appointed who is not, or who will not become, a member of a trade union." This was followed in December by another no less drastic :—

> That in future no one be employed in the Building Department excepting those who have been members of their respective trade societies, also of a Co-operative Society, or a member of a Co-operative household for a period of not less than three months prior to their application for employment. No deviation to be made from the above without permission from the Building Committee.

The question of window dressing was for quite a long time a vexing problem. At first the idea was scouted as being a truckling to an extravagant and wasteful system. As a result, up to the starting of Ashley Road Branch, the Society's shop fronts displayed nothing but a dismally dull inside layer of chocolate-coloured paint. Those members who were pleading for the more artistic shop display seized their opportunity upon the opening of this Branch, and an experiment was made with half a window. This has been followed at other Stores, and the principle has now become recognised.

In December, 1904, the Committee of the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society wrote asking whether the Bristol and District Society would entertain an amalgamation proposal. As a result of this communication a conference between the two committees was arranged and preliminaries settled. The chief difficulties appeared to be (1) undertakings which the Shirehampton and Avonmouth friends had given in respect to property recently

purchased, and (2) the adjustment of dividend. A valuation of the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society's assets proved that the financial position was sound—in fact, that there was £517 in total appreciation of shares. A Special General Meeting of the Bristol and District Society was held on February 25th, 1905, when it was agreed by a vote of 268 to 13 to amalgamate upon equal terms. At the next Quarterly Meeting in March the necessary formal regulations were passed by a Special Meeting, convened after the business meeting, quite unanimously:—

That this Society and the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Co-operative Society Limited shall be amalgamated on the conditions following:—

1. The name of the amalgamated Society shall be the Bristol and District Co-operative Society Limited.

2. The rules of the amalgamated Society shall be the rules of the Bristol and District Co-operative Society Limited.

3. All the members of each of the above-named Societies at the time when this resolution is registered shall be members of the amalgamated Society, each of whom shall be credited in the books of the Society with the like amounts of shares, share capital, loans, deposits, dividend and interest, as are now standing to his or her credit in the books of the Society of which he or she is a member, as per valuation at the date of such registration.

4. The amalgamated Society shall be credited with all the assets of the above-named Societies as per valuation at the date of registration of this resolution, and shall undertake all the obligations affecting either of the said Societies at such date.

By the passing of this resolution the Bristol and District Society crowned its long career of usefulness with an added glory. It was a recognition of the truth that Co-operation knows no boundaries, and that it is the duty, as well as the privilege, of the strong to help the weak. But a month or two more and it, too, became merged into a larger Society, and the future of Shirehampton and Avonmouth, no less than Bristol and District, must be looked for in the annals of the Bristol Co-operative Society Limited.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

BRISTOL AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

PRESIDENTS.

Mr. ALFRED HARRIS.....	4¼	years	1885 to 1889.
,, WILLIAM J. LLOYD 10¼		,,	1889 to 1899.
,, JOHN BROWN	3¼	,,	1899 to 1903.
,, HENRY A. CARTER	3	,,	1903 to 1905.

SECRETARIES.

Mr. J. W. H. WALL.....	1½	years	1885 to 1887.
,, J. D. GRIFFITH	2½	,,	1887 to 1889.
,, RALPH BLAKE.....	¼	,,	1889.
,, H. HEWITT.....	½	,,	1890.
,, T. H. SMITH 15¼		,,	1890 to 1905.

AUDITORS.

Mr. GEORGE BELSTEIN	1	year	1885.
,, RICHARD SHARNEY.....	1	,,	part 1885 and 1887.
,, VAUGHAN NASH.....	¾	,,	part of 1885 and 1886.
,, JOHN DAVIS	½	,,	1886.
,, WILLIAM J. LLOYD	1½	,,	1886 to 1887.
,, J. D. GRIFFITH	1¼	,,	1886 to 1887 and 1 quarter 1893.
,, W. COLE	1	,,	1887 to 1888.
,, W. H. PHILLIPS.....	3½	,,	1888 to 1889, 1891 to 1893.
,, J. W. H. WALL.....	1½	,,	1889 to 1890.
,, W. J. PETHERICK	2¾	,,	1889 to 1890, 1893 to 1894.
,, G. H. HARRIS.....	1	,,	part 1890, 1893.
,, F. S. BUCHAN.....14¾		,,	1889 to 1905.
,, JAMES SMITH	3¼	,,	1895 to 1898.
,, W. H. GILLETT	4¾	,,	1898 to 1903.
,, W. J. FORD.....	2	,,	1903 to 1905.

COMMITTEE-MEN.

Mr. G. H. CLARKE 17¼		years	1886 to 1903.
,, J. D. GRIFFITH 14		,,	1886 to 1898, 1901 to 1902.
,, JOHN BROWN 13		,,	1886 to 1899.

COMMITTEE-MEN—*continued.*

Mr. F. KITLEY	12½	years	1886 to 1888, 1890 to 1898, 1903 to 1904.
Mrs. LUCY SHEPPARD	11	,,	1894 to 1902, 1903 to 1905.
Mr. E. HODGE	10½	,,	1887 to 1897.
,, A. E. BRAGG	9¾	,,	1893 to 1901, 1902 to 1903.
,, JAMES SPILLER	9	,,	1894 to 1903.
,, W. H. NOBLE	7½	,,	1887 to 1894
,, W. J. PETHERICK	7¼	,,	1898 to 1905.
,, JOHN SAUNDERS	7	,,	1890 to 1897.
,, H. HYATT	6¾	,,	1885 to 1887, 1890 to 1893.
,, W. COLE	6½	,,	1885 to 1892.
,, H. A. CARTER	6	,,	1886, 1897 to 1902.
,, D. DAVIES	6	,,	1899 to 1905.
Mrs. FIDKIN	5½	,,	1900 to 1902, 1902 to 1905.
Mr. WAGER	5¼	,,	1898 to 1902.
,, MARSH	5¼	,,	1900 to 1905.
,, BRACEY	4¾	,,	1895 to 1900.
,, HOLLINGBURY	3¾	,,	1885 to 1888.
,, SMITH	3¾	,,	1890 to 1894.
,, BUTTON	3¾	,,	1894 to 1897.
,, LONG	3¼	,,	1897 to 1900.
,, PENNEY	3	,,	1898 to 1900.
,, H. BROWN	3	,,	1885 to 1887.
,, J. WHITE	3	,,	1885 to 1887.
,, W. J. LLOYD	2¼	,,	1885 to 1886, 1887 to 1389.
,, J. H. DAVIS	2¼	,,	1902 to 1904.
,, JAYNE	2¼	,,	1888 to 1890.
,, S. PHIPPS	2	,,	1886 to 1888.
,, W. R. OXLEY	2	,,	1903 to 1905.
,, F. MILLS	2	,,	1903 to 1905.
,, A. TAMBLING	1¾	,,	1886 to 1887.
,, J. W. H. WALL	1¾	,,	1892 to 1893.
,, G. TURNER	1½	,,	1885 to 1886.
,, BLAKE	1½	,,	1889 to 1890.
,, HILLMAN	1½	,,	1904 to 1905.
,, SHELLARD	1½	,,	1895 to 1897.
Mrs. M. FOUND	1½	,,	1904 to 1905.
Mr. BELL	1¼	,,	1889 to 1890.
,, CATNACH	1¼	,,	1897 to 1898.
,, F. AKERMAN	1¼	,,	1901 to 1902.
Mrs. GREENLAND	1¼	,,	1902 to 1903.

COMMITTEE-MEN—*continued.*

Mr. CUMMING	1¼	year	1903 to 1904.
,, CROSS	1¼	,,	1903 to 1904.
,, HOWELL	1¼	,,	1904 to 1905.
,, EWING	1¼	,,	1904 to 1905.
,, W. E. BALL	1	,,	1885 to 1886.
,, R. SHORNEY	1	,,	1885 to 1886.
,, PHILLIPS	1	,,	1889.
,, T. BEARD	less than 1 yr.		1885.
,, W. EICKHOFF	,,	,,	1885.
,, G. IRELAND	,,	,,	1885.
,, C. NASH	,,	,,	1885.
,, T. CASHING	,,	,,	1885.
,, H. HEWITT	,,	,,	1890.
,, HENDY	,,	,,	1904.
,, C. CONNOLLY	,,	,,	1905.
,, T. PHILLIPS	,,	,,	1905.



STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BRISTOL AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

ESTABLISHED 1884.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans, Including Bank Ov'rdraft.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Feb., 1885.....	54	48	...	18	10/–	...	41	11	5/–	...	25
May, 1885.....	63	72	...	4	12/–	...	63	12	1	...	20
Aug., 1885.....	80	95	...	10	2	...	73	14	3	...	21
Nov., 1885..... ...	89	105	...	21	2	...	98	14	6	...	29
Feb., 1886.....	83	124	...	9	3	...	102	16	7	...	29
May, 1886.....	88	135	...	25	6	...	109	16	10	...	56
Aug., 1886.....	144	155	3	78	9	...	165	25	12	...	69
Nov., 1886.....	160	193	4	63	11	...	211	41	18	...	42
Feb., 1887.....	251	303	7	68	13	...	203	48	24	...	177
May, 1887.....	319	396	11	40	16	...	313	86	30	...	93
Aug., 1887.....	352	496	11	173	21	...	357	177	37	...	73
Nov., 1887.....	...	559	19	131	21	...	372	240	47	...	56
Feb., 1888.....	...	553	23	82	4	...	380	292	56	...	12
May, 1888.....	...	578	37	110	11	...	403	281	62	...	26
Aug., 1888.....	...	603	40	131	16	...	413	314	69	...	23
Nov. 1888.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Feb., 1889.....	...	758	26	107	20	...	508	317	88	...	47
May, 1889.....	...	859	31	180	21	...	524	414	96	...	115
Aug., 1889.....	450	907	35	306	21	...	689	445	109	...	117
Nov., 1889.....	505	1051	62	436	21	...	750	596	122	...	216
Feb., 1890.....	581	1145	64	543	23	2000	1011	2530	138	...	217
May, 1890.....	600	1400	80	300	24	2200	843	3107	151	...	64
Aug., 1890.....	630	1489	80	233	25	2200	776	3111	167	...	75
Nov., 1890.....	681	1553	134	530	25	2700	1101	3699	182	...	87
Feb., 1891.....	721	1597	197	544	26	2700	1138	3713	207	...	87
May, 1891.....	663	1763	280	622	26	2700	1365	3758	224	...	162
Aug., 1891.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nov., 1891.....	727	1871	260	544	27	3500	1410	4717	203	...	47

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.											
				Net.	Interest on Capital.			Dividend.		Bonus to Employees.			Educational Purposes.		
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Feb., 1885.....	...	130	...	14	0	5	0	1	6		...		0	7	0
May, 1885.....	6	205	0 6 0	21	0	10	0	1	6		...		0	10	0
Aug., 1885.....	15	202	0 7 0	6	0	13	0	0	6		...			...	
Nov., 1885.....	16	237	0 7 6	14	0	15	0	1	0		...		0	10	0
Feb., 1886.....	15	263	0 8 0	18	0	17	0	1	1		...		0	10	0
May, 1886.....	16	258	0 8 0	21	1	0	0	1	2		...		1	0	0
Aug., 1886.....	21	341	0 9 0	23	1	5	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	10	0
Nov., 1886.....	32	498	1 0 0	29	1	9	0	1	2	1	8	9	0	13	9
Feb., 1887.....	39	727	1 5 0	56	2	0	0	1	3	2	16	6	3	7	0
May, 1887.....	72	1236	2 4 0	55	3	0	0	0	10	2	7	0	1	2	9
Aug., 1887.....	90	1146	7 15 0	*54	4	0	0	...			...			...	
Nov., 1887.....	95	1202	9 0 0	*18	4	0	0	...			...			...	
Feb., 1888.....	92	1144	10 0 0	43	6	0	0	0	8	2	3	0	1	0	0
May, 1888.....	101	1248	7 0 0	46	6	0	0	0	9	2	1	0	1	0	0
Aug., 1888.....	104	1188	8 0 0	32	5	0	0	0	4	1	7	0	0	15	0
Nov., 1888.....	...	...	...	...		...		...			...			...	
Feb., 1889.....	92	1386	8 0 0	47	7	0	0	0	10	2	7	0	1	0	0
May, 1889.....	91	1435	19 0 0	64	8	0	0	1	0	3	3	0	1	0	0
Aug., 1889.....	98	1658	9 0 0	75	9	0	0	1	1	3	12	0	1	15	0
Nov., 1889.....	118	1958	15 0 0	85	10	0	0	1	0	4	4	0	2	2	0
Feb., 1890.....	139	2240	19 0 0	130	12	0	0	1	0	6	10	0	3	4	0
May, 1890.....	138	2204	23 0 0	116	12	0	0	1	1	6	0	0	3	0	0
Aug., 1890.....	144	2043	11 0 0	88	16	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	2	0	0
Nov., 1890.....	146	2322	19 0 0	104	16	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	2	0	0
Feb., 1891.....	181	2698	21 0 0	94	17	0	0	0	9	4	0	0	2	0	0
May, 1891.....	188	2785	19 0 0	138	19	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	2	0	0
Aug., 1891.....	...	...	...	...		...		...			...			...	
Nov., 1891.....	194	2736	23 0 0	138	21	0	0	0	11	7	0	0	3	0	0

* Loss.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BRISTOL AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued.*

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans, Including Bank Ov'rdraft.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Feb., 1892.....	615	1864	320	595	28	3600	1446	4838	225	...	13
May, 1892.....	639	1996	314	327	28	3600	1304	4850	198	...	45
Aug., 1892.....	626	2092	235	470	29	3600	1441	4845	210	...	19
Nov., 1892.....	650	2174	260	388	29	3575	1363	4851	198	...	127
Feb., 1893.....	700	2235	268	498	22	3550	1461	4837	223	...	169
May, 1893.....	739	2315	273	380	23	3525	1437	4836	244	...	120
Aug., 1893.....	821	2315	273	332	23	3525	1409	4847	270	...	96
Nov., 1893.....	803	2374	283	353	23	3500	1429	4859	290	...	228
Feb., 1894.....	824	2449	292	506	27	3500	1680	4864	266	...	272
May, 1894.....	854	2597	307	393	30	3300	1503	4878	288	...	200
Aug., 1894.....	857	2632	287	203	35	3300	1296	4855	308	...	274
Nov., 1894.....	911	2694	312	509	40	2800	1190	4832	334	...	356
Feb., 1895.....	936	2798	303	429	44	2600	1096	4810	320	...	358
May, 1895.....	945	2921	320	522	54	2250	1225	4887	400	...	169
Aug., 1895.....	1009	3254	298	728	59	3055	1228	5944	358	...	354
Nov., 1895.....	1219	3829	318	776	65	2650	1360	5900	356	...	741
Feb., 1896.....	1401	4257	352	936	71	2650	1763	6198	408	...	558
May, 1896.....	1548	4550	329	709	76	2150	1618	6149	381	...	480
Aug., 1896.....	1626	5067	462	989	89	2445	1697	7182	358	...	454
Nov., 1896.....	1740	5423	512	1077	98	2445	2141	7308	372	...	555
Feb., 1897.....	1962	5906	579	1659	107	2370	2338	8254	393	...	530
May, 1897.....	2232	6557	583	2058	115	2070	2806	8640	361	...	609
Aug., 1897.....	2385	7267	699	1729	123	1650	2874	8562	376	...	491
Nov., 1897.....	2604	7770	763	1363	134	1650	2993	8950	381	...	354
*Feb., 1898.....	2898	8492	916	2171	141	1650	3906	10079	404	...	17
May, 1898.....	3084	9288	1142	2513	147	1650	3936	11348	390	...	30
Aug., 1898.....	3253	9716	974	2187	154	1650	3501	11871	424	...	40
Nov., 1898.....	3441	10241	927	2748	161	1650	3604	12478	406	...	626

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.				
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus to Employees.	Educational.
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	s. d.	£	£ s. d.
Feb., 1892.....	201	2788	18 0 0	133	22 0 0	0 11	6	3 0 0
May, 1892.....	199	2733	18 0 0	128	23 0 0	0 11	5	3 0 0
Aug., 1892.....	207	2504	18 0 0	109	24 0 0	0 11	5	2 0 0
Nov., 1892.....	207	2512	2 0 0	107	25 0 0	0 10	5	2 0 0
Feb., 1893.....	210	2799	17 0 0	146	26 0 0	0 11	7	3 0 0
May, 1893.....	212	2940	17 0 0	148	27 0 0	0 11	7	3 0 0
Aug., 1893.....	220	3000	18 0 0	197	27 0 0	1 0	9	5 0 0
Nov., 1893.....	228	3133	24 0 0	176	27 0 0	1 0	9	4 0 0
Feb., 1894.....	230	3306	24 0 0	217	20 0 0	1 1	10	6 0 0
May, 1894.....	245	3242	24 0 0	209	22 0 0	1 1	9	4 0 0
Aug., 1894.....	241	3033	23 0 0	198	24 0 0	1 1	8	4 0 0
Nov., 1894.....	240	3259	22 0 0	261	29 0 0	1 3	11	6 0 0
Feb., 1895.....	242	3458	22 0 0	291	30 0 0	1 5	13	6 1 0
May, 1895.....	247	3777	107 0 0	366	31 0 0	1 6	16	8 0 0
Aug., 1895.....	256	3793	62 0 0	371	33 0 0	1 7	15	7 0 0
Nov., 1895.....	267	4061	74 0 0	445	38 0 0	1 8	18	9 0 0
Feb., 1896.....	329	5039	53 0 0	503	44 0 0	1 8	22	11 0 0
May, 1896.....	374	6062	59 0 0	546	49 0 0	1 8	24	12 0 0
Aug., 1896.....	377	5689	34 0 0	453	55 0 0	1 8	20	10 0 0
Nov., 1896.....	411	6217	24 0 0	604	60 0 0	1 8	29	14 0 0
Feb., 1897.....	513	7333	74 0 0	713	63 0 0	1 8	33	17 0 0
May, 1897.....	521	7929	54 0 0	706	71 0 0	1 9	34	17 0 0
Aug., 1897.....	550	7874	66 0 0	651	81 0 0	1 9	31	16 0 0
Nov., 1897.....	538	9012	56 0 0	892	85 0 0	1 9	43	21 0 0
*Feb., 1898.....	632	10315	56 0 0	956	94 0 0	1 8	47	24 0 0
May, 1898.....	666	10932	71 0 0	928	105 0 0	1 8	45	32 0 0
Aug., 1898.....	759	11069	106 0 0	999	111 0 0	1 8	49	24 0 0
Nov., 1898.....	757	11598	175 0 0	1093	116 0 0	1 8	51	25 0 0

* Bank Overdraft.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BRISTOL AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued.*

Quarter Ended	No. of Members	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans, Including Bank Ov'rdraft.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Feb., 1899.....	3651	11086	974	2810	168	2637	3706	13410	545	...	1775
May, 1899.....	3015	11614	1069	3320	186	5590	3878	17293	632	404	1395
Aug., 1899.....	3121	12526	2465	2670	208	3220	3835	17707	790	362	33
Oct., 1899.....	3278	13470	3251	3327	227	2450	4603	18272	875	404	7
Jan., 1900.....	3457	14452	3705	3092	238	1650	4676	18659	1077	499	15
May, 1900.....	3599	15273	2591	3952	269	1650	5075	18807	1197	520	37
July, 1900.....	3800	16021	2871	4035	290	1650	5527	19174	1384	562	74
Oct., 1900.....	4000	16580	2766	4344	311	1650	6113	19391	1509	555	76
Jan., 1901.....	4244	17697	2770	3143	333	1650	5331	19856	1731	594	61
April, 1901.....	4472	19510	2319	3262	354	1650	6233	20493	1731	629	36
July, 1901.....	4633	20540	4225	3340	377	1650	6517	22746	1964	697	136
Oct., 1901.....	4883	21666	2548	5022	401	1650	7109	24027	1759	742	181
Jan., 1902.....	5205	22625	4531	4010	424	1650	7806	25055	2048	807	88
April, 1902.....	5633	24324	4111	4060	448	1650	8423	25655	1781	1067	63
July, 1902.....	5955	26394	2901	5816	470	1650	9224	25698	2099	1120	1333
Oct., 1902.....	6201	27677	2987	4987	495	1650	10100	25710	1818	1242	1388
Jan., 1903.....	6365	28014	3515	4473	527	1650	10086	25457	2151	1260	2113
April, 1903.....	5921	29332	3746	3282	556	1650	8882	25952	1777	1232	3552
July, 1903.....	6111	30745	3911	4509	583	...	9112	26396	2108	1169	3758
Oct., 1903.....	6385	32527	4122	6002	610	...	11229	26707	1820	1263	5471
Jan., 1904.....	6601	34005	4274	4779	651	...	10548	26818	2195	1327	6883
April, 1904.....	6919	36730	4408	5871	719	...	11205	27526	1939	1433	9825
July, 1904.....	7215	38403	5031	6564	875	...	11581	28019	2247	1443	11417
Oct., 1904.....	7557	40212	5420	5646	970	...	11750	27888	2585	1671	11300
Jan., 1905.....	7810	42145	5721	5744	1065	...	14280	30496	3118	1815	9123
April, 1905.....	8195	46103	6511	8497	1192	...	15004	34459	3750	2327	11083
July, 1905.....	8485	48562	6689	6900	1324	600	15177	36365	4383	2325	9779

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.				
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus to Employees.	Educational Purposes.
	£	£	£	£	£	s. d.	£	£
Feb., 1899.....	910	13200	315	1308	122	1 9	63	31
May, 1899.....	982	14237	346	1404	138	1 9	66	33
Aug., 1899.....	1044	13415	223	1349	129	1 9	66	33
Oct., 1899.....	1046	13362	145	1335	162	1 9	59	30
Jan., 1900.....	1146	15026	193	1494	159	1 9	75	35
May, 1900.....	1202	15705	297	1537	173	1 9	76	38
July, 1900.....	1136	15692	246	1493	188	1 9	72	36
Oct., 1900.....	1366	16770	190	1691	183	1 9	81	40
Jan., 1901.....	1658	18087	239	1728	206	1 9	84	42
April, 1901.....	1762	19314	239	1828	222	1 9	88	44
July, 1901.....	1938	18643	240	1797	243	1 9	90	45
Oct., 1901.....	1947	19768	249	2150	249	1 10	102	51
Jan., 1902.....	2191	22251	271	2125	265	1 9	104	52
April, 1902.....	2409	24496	292	2302	280	1 8	113	56
July, 1902.....	2335	25087	300	1980	305	1 6	95	47
Oct., 1902.....	2444	25430	255	2217	322	1 6	106	53
Jan., 1903.....	2385	26609	358	2447	328	1 8	121	60
April, 1903.....	2492	27775	312	2499	337	1 7	124	62
July, 1903.....	2849	27770	317	2462	358	1 7	123	61
Oct., 1903.....	2914	28838	331	2839	383	1 8	136	68
Jan., 1904.....	*3000	32155	329	3366	397	1 9	167	83
April, 1904.....	3260	33512	586	3503	412	1 9	169	84
July, 1904.....	3572	33787	415	3369	501	1 9	162	81
Oct., 1904.....	4147	37509	506	3920	459	1 9	184	92
Jan., 1905.....	4266	35966	647	3783	484	1 9	193	96
April, 1905.....	5134	42545	533	4160	548	1 9	183	91
July, 1905.....	5026	42723	521	4070	554	1 8	206	103

* Estimated.



CHAPTER XXIV.

The Shirehampton and Avonmouth Co-operative Society Limited.

"CO-OPERATION!" whispered Alf Pearce. Alf usually does whisper on occasions of importance. His eyes opened wide with a look of wonderment, as if amazed at his own audacity, and a smile illumining his whole countenance with a glow of honest pride, his friends know full well that the whisper is due to the modesty of the man; from another of lesser weight (for our friend is by no means a pigmy) and more assurance similar suggestions might be trumpeted forth in tones of living thunder. Alf Pearce is an ardent trade unionist, quietly enthusiastic in this as in all other movements contributing to the social well-being, and it was to trade unionists that his remarks were addressed.

Not the least among the benefits that trade unionism has brought to the workers has been the broadening of ideals, influenced by freedom of thought and discussion. The Avonmouth Branch of the Dockers' Union has been characterised by a wisdom and self-respect not usually associated with those who "lump the cargoes." They have been wise in their choice of leaders, and they have not neglected to hold meetings among themselves. It was their custom in 1892, after the usual business was concluded, to introduce subjects likely to be of general interest for open discussion. It was on one of these occasions that our friend startled the meeting by suggesting "Co-operation" as a subject worth dealing with, accompanying his recommendation with such arguments in favour that it was there and then decided to try and give the debate a practical turn. It was accordingly resolved to approach the Committee of the Bedminster

Society for information and advice. Resulting from this a public meeting was convened. In due course, the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society became an integral part of the Co-operative movement. And the pioneer was Alf Pearce.

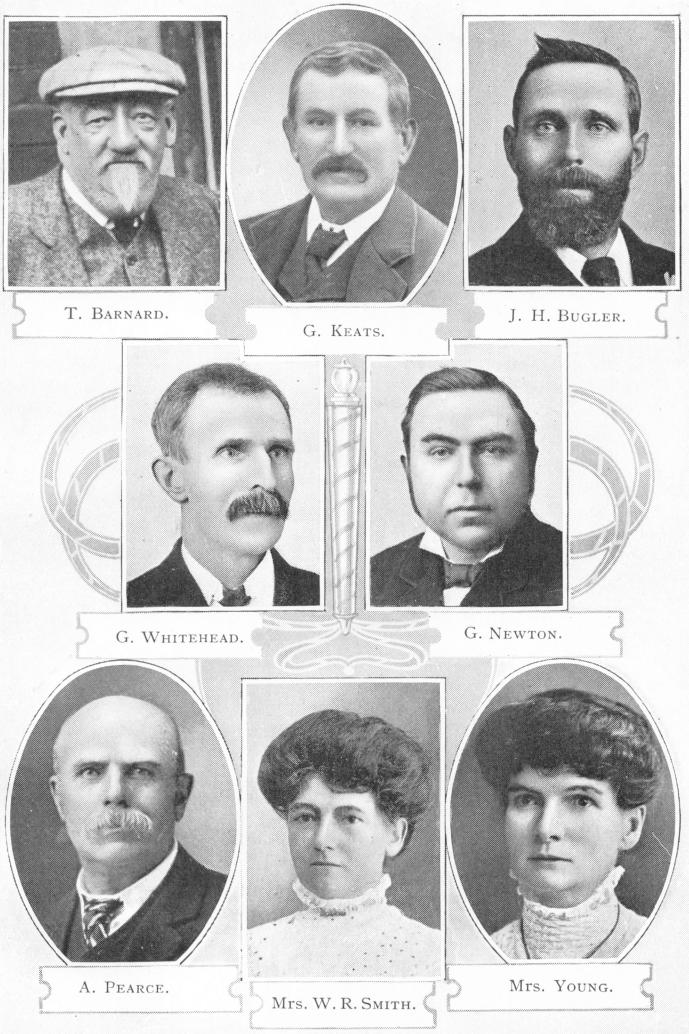
The meeting was held on a Thursday evening in April, 1892, in the National Schools. Mr. Gilmore Barnett presided, and there was a good attendance. Several representative Bristol Co-operators were present. The Chairman, in his remarks, urged those present to join the movement, and called upon Mr. J. F. Hopkins (Bedminster) to move the following resolution:—

Believing that the spread of Co-operation will tend to improve the condition of the labouring classes, it would be beneficial to the dockers and other residents of Avonmouth and district to adopt its principles by forming a Co-operative Society.

Mr. J. Brown (Bristol and District Society) seconded in an able speech, and was supported by Mr. John Reed (Chairman of the Bedminster Society). Before putting the resolution, the Chairman invited questions from the audience, the replies to which gave great satisfaction. The resolution was then put and unanimously carried amidst applause. Mr. Ponting (Avonmouth) then moved:—

That, after hearing the advantages of Co-operation so fully explained, we (the residents of Avonmouth and district) pledge ourselves to form a Co-operative Society at Avonmouth, and at once elect a Provisional Committee and Officers *pro tem.* to make all the necessary preliminary arrangements.

Mr. A. Pearce seconded. Mr. A. Bullock (Bedminster), in explaining some of the doubtful points, heartily commended the resolution to the favourable consideration of the meeting. Mr. Hodge (Bristol District) also urged them to agree to the resolution, and cited the advantages the movement had conferred upon himself and other working men. The resolution was agreed to unanimously. Messrs. H. Ponting, A. Pearce, G. Keats, W. Barnard, A. Barnard, G. Whitehead, H. Stokes, J. Chalker, and A. Cook were appointed to act as Provisional Committee; Mr. W. Barnard being elected to act as Secretary.



PIONEERS AND OFFICIALS OF SHIREHAMTON AND AVONMOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

Twenty-five members were enrolled at that meeting, and subscriptions amounting to £30 received; Mr. Gilmore Barnett becoming responsible for £5; and another enthusiast £2, the remaining twenty-three £1 each.

The Provisional Committee quickly got to work, and in a few weeks called a meeting of members to pass the rules, the model rules of the Co-operative Union being adopted, and a Management Committee was elected as follows:—Messrs. W. Barnard, A. Barnard, A. Cook, J. Chalker, W. James, G. Keates, A. Pearce, H. Ponting, H. Stokes, G. Whitehead. Mr. Thomas Barnard was elected Chairman, Mr. G. Newton Treasurer, and Mr. J. H. Bugler Secretary. Premises were secured after some difficulty at 30, Meadow Street; Mr. Stock, a young man from the Bedminster Society, engaged as Manager; and the C.W.S. (Bristol) was approached for assistance in making up the first order for goods; and early in July, 1892, the Store was opened for business.

It was not to be expected that these preparations could be made without causing plenty of small talk, especially among the traders of the district. With the courage of the boy who whistles when going through the churchyard, they predicted an early demise—by some, the Store was given just five weeks of life, and no more. Still, their confidence was not sufficient to stay them from trying to influence the landlord (Mr. Stride) against letting his shop to "these pestilential Co-operators." All kinds of dire consequences from his trader tenants were threatened; but he took an eminently practical view of the situation, and let his premises to those he knew were willing and able to pay the rent.

The smallness of their capital would not permit of outlay for counter and shop fixtures of orthodox style; so, after working hours were done, these pioneers, with their own or borrowed tools, fashioned their own counter and shelving, much to the disturbance of their less enthusiastic neighbours, who requisitioned the services of the village policeman to stop the noise. Before the majesty of the law could operate, however, the job was

done and the shop opened for business. It was on Saturday night, and the utmost excitement prevailed in the district, when the advance guard of the private traders appeared, evidently bent on spying out the land. With the unerring instinct of a parent, friend Pearce divined his purpose, and so embarrassed the poor fellow with a look of scorn that he rushed to the counter and asked for ½lb. curry powder. So completely overcome was he by our friend's gaze that, for the moment, he was for transferring his wholesale trading to the Store, for who ever heard of a retail purchase of ½lb. curry powder! A brisk business was done. The Committee were thoroughly satisfied at the close of the day to find that £10 worth of goods had been converted into cash. This was no flash in the pan; the sales were steadily maintained week by week during the first quarter, averaging nearly £30 per week for the whole period. Members and share capital also continued to come in, the twenty-five members by quarter end increasing to fifty, and the £30 of share capital to £60. Thus were the critics falsified, as they have been ever since.

The Society commenced by selling groceries, provisions, and boots. After the first quarter bread was purchased through a local baker, who allowed the Society a discount. After the first year had proved the Society to be a success, other stocks were added—drapery, crockery, and brushes—while, in eighteen months from the start, a couple of local butchers were quite willing to figure upon the Society's balance sheet as purveyors of meat to the members, and at a little later date clothing, too, was added to the list of outside supplies.

In the balance sheet for September, 1894, the Committee announced that they had started baking for themselves, and confidently appealed for support, which confidence was never misplaced. In the same report is the statement, full of significance, that in the Boot Department it had been thought best "to stock the Wholesale Society's goods only." This sturdy support of Co-operative productive enterprise was quite characteristic of Avonmouth Co-operators.

In July, 1895, the Savings Bank was opened for juveniles, and from a modest beginning of 18s. 2d. in the shape of deposits during that quarter this account grew to over £120 for the quarter ending October, 1903.

In the early part of 1896 it was found desirable to transfer the business to more commodious premises, and accordingly a lease was taken for seven years of a block at the corner of Meadow Street, facing Gloucester Road end, wherein the Society took up its abode. Coal was added to the list of supplies, and, in addition to a private firm, the Bristol and District Society was named as a provider of clothing to the members.

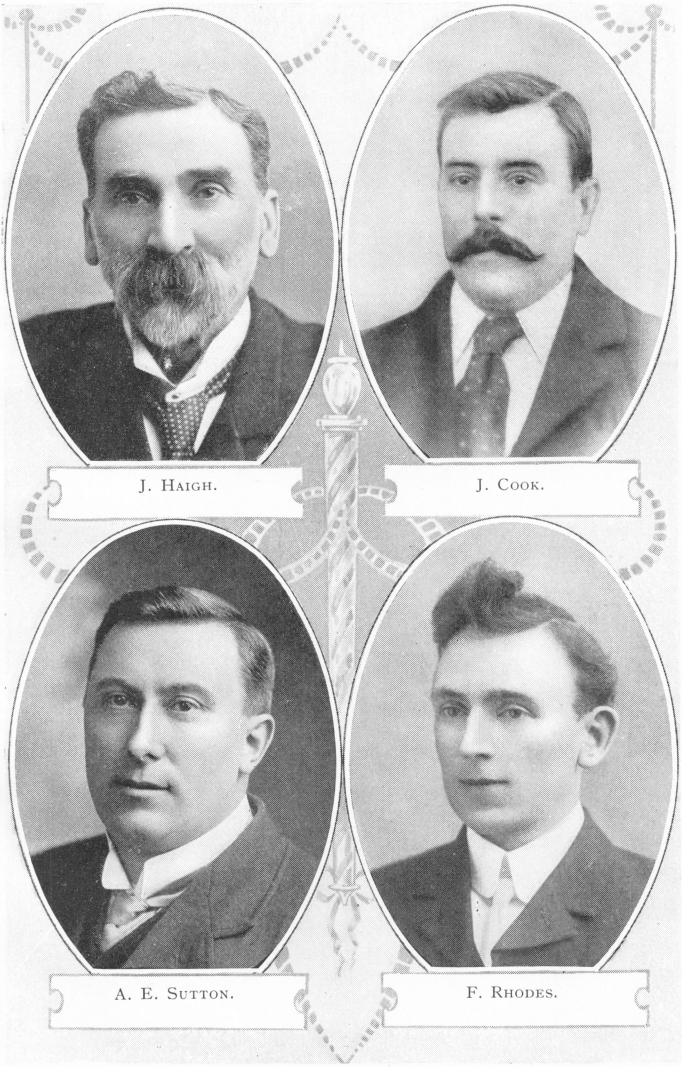
Except for gradually increasing its membership and sales, the Society proceeded in somewhat humdrum fashion, quite upon orthodox lines, for the first ten years of its existence. For some years a dividend of 1s. 6d. was paid, and wisely a good reserve fund was built up. But beyond an occasional reference on the balance sheet, and by the Chairman at meetings, to the necessity for supporting Co-operative productions, practically nothing was done to make intelligent Co-operators of the members.

An educational fund was maintained, it is true, but the disbursements made from the fund were rather in the direction of subscriptions to flower shows, the Co-operative Union, and the Bristol and Somerset Association, with an occasional children's treat or concert thrown in. Such methods of education, excellent enough in their way, were not calculated to promote Co-operative zeal of a discriminating order; and, although there were always enthusiasts in the cause prominently associated with the Society's doings, for the greater part of the time they were passive rather than active leaders, accepting things as they came, and doing but little to inspire their fellow-members with high and noble ideals of Co-operation. In short, the trading sentiment predominated, and it was only to be expected, when the day of trial came, that it was upon its ability to trade that the Society was judged.

Of changes in officials there were many, especially during the last five years. The first Manager (Mr. Stock)

stayed less than a year. His health not being very good, he found it advisable to move abroad. His successor (Mr. J. S. Cook) held the post for six years. During the early part of Mr. Cook's term of office he had to leave by an early train on Saturday evenings in order to reach his home, which was in the Forest of Dean. At these times the members of the Committee would do as other Committee-man have done elsewhere, doff their coats and don aprons, to carry on the practical work of dispensing wares. Many a "gude wife" will call to mind the odd scraps of bacon and cheese with which her partner has replenished the larder on Saturday nights, purchased at full prices, in order that these leavings might not prejudice the profit on the general sales. For it was not to be expected that these amateurs could use the tools of an experienced provision hand without some little bungling.

Under Mr. Cook's management, to all appearances, the Society was progressing very favourably, but subsequent investigations have indicated that all was not so fair. A fatal mistake was made in that Mr. Cook was paid a salary and commission upon sales. It was obviously to his interest to declare the takings as high as possible; and, as the Society had recognised a system of credit among the members, it was easy for a Manager, so long as his office was continuous, to regulate his debts and sales quarter by quarter. Throughout the whole period the debts of members had been advancing, but, as the sales increased in even greater proportion, there was nothing to cause serious alarm. From that time onward the Society did not progress in the truest sense. This incubus of debt was a constant worry to the officials, and a menace to the peace of the community. The Committee were quite at a loss as to how they might cope with this difficulty. They had had no experience adequate to deal with such a situation, and Mr. Sutton, who succeeded Mr. Cook in the management, was seriously handicapped through lack of knowledge of the members; further, the embarrassment of the Committee was increased by the resignation of the Secretary (Mr. J. H. Bugler), which occurred in December, 1899.



MANAGERS SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH SOCIETY.

For some time Mr. Bugler had been failing in health, and although he bravely bore up against the illness which at last proved fatal, it was obviously a desperate effort. He lingered in retirement for nearly two years, and passed away on August 19th, 1902. Mr. Bugler had been devoted to the cause from the commencement. The Society's first Secretary, he remained in that position until his ill-health forced him to resign. For a few weeks after Mr. Cook's retirement he acted as Manager, but his rapidly-failing strength made it necessary that other assistance should be obtained. He was a steady, persistent plodder, a thoroughly enthusiastic Co-operator, with an intense passion for securing all the benefits of Co-operation to the people of Avonmouth. He was respected by all who knew him, and by his resignation the Society lost the sterling services of one who might have steered them clear of the shoals and quicksands into which they floundered a few years later. For a brief period his office was filled by Mr. A. C. Barnard, but upon Mr. Sutton's resignation in January, 1901, Mr. W. E. Plumley was the first to be appointed to the dual office as Secretary and Manager. This young man only stayed one quarter, and was followed by Mr. J. Haigh, also as Managing Secretary.

Meanwhile the trend of events had roused the Committee into action, and simultaneously with the appointment of Mr. Haigh it was decided by the members, on the recommendation of the Committee, to appoint the Audit Department of the C.W.S. to take stock and audit the accounts of the Society each quarter.

CHAPTER XXV.

WITH the advent of the new Manager was also inaugurated a Branch of the Women's Guild; and almost immediately unwonted signs of activity began to exhibit themselves in the operations of the Society. A spirit of inquiry and a desire for educational facilities were manifested, and we see here and there some evidences of an influence that cannot but have been derived from the neighbouring Society at Bristol. Such was the election of three lady members to the Committee in October, 1901; also a resolution in June, 1903, that the names of movers and seconders of resolutions should be recorded on the minutes; and an elaboration of Sub-Committees on the same date. A little later it was decided that quarterly conferences should be held with employés. But even more striking in these parallels was the emergence of two parties in the councils of the Society. The Women's Guild Branch and a section of the Committee, critical of the supine policy which had hitherto characterised the Society, in season and out, pressed for a more vigorous and more definitely constructive lead. But it would appear that the old party more surely reflected the general temperament of the members, and, except for a brief period, that section held its own. The apparent futility of the struggle led some of the reforming section to transfer their allegiance to the Bristol and District, and a series of financial disasters precipitated a crisis, which will be dealt with in due course. Meanwhile, important developments from a trading standpoint were taking place, which must be our first concern.

In 1901-2 a general awakening was taking place at Avonmouth. After a controversy lasting over many years as to whether it would be better to dockise the River Avon or provide extended facilities at Avonmouth, the Bristol Corporation, in July, 1900, had decided upon the

latter course, and in March, 1902, the Prince of Wales cut the first sod of the Royal Edward Dock. In preparation for the vast undertaking which the scheme foreshadowed, a large number of navvies and labourers were drafted into Avonmouth during 1901, and temporary wooden dwellings were erected near the site of the new docks for their accommodation. With an eye to business the Society started a delivery round in their midst, and during the building of the dock did a considerably increased trade in consequence. On the occasion of the royal visit in 1902 the Society was well to the fore in the decoration of its premises; and, as they had secured the contract for providing the children and old folks with a tea, it is clear that by this time the Store was regarded as one of the permanent institutions of Avonmouth.

In connection with these functions great enthusiasm prevailed among members of the Society, and there was no lack of volunteers to help in the arrangements. Some offered to loan tables, others plants, but all worked with a will. Notwithstanding this, when the accounts were made up it was found that a loss had been made upon the undertaking.

This was not the only occasion upon which the Society catered for public functions. To celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII., a public dinner, subscribed for in the district, was given to sixty of the oldest inhabitants. Mrs. Keats (the President's wife) voluntarily undertook the preparations, and a most satisfactory spread was arranged.

The Society was compensated for its losses on these functions by the quickening of Co-operative zeal which they occasioned. Trade began to warm, especially in the neighbourhood of Shirehampton, and the arrangements for establishing a Branch there were hastened. Suitable premises were found and rented in Bradley Crescent, and the No. 1 Branch was opened on July 14th, 1902. It was fully expected that this district would develop considerably as a result of the dock extension; for, although at least two miles from the river mouth, it is most favourably situated in respect to railway facilities, and a ferry at this point places the village in close communication with the

docks at Portishead. Moreover, the natural beauties of the environs are unsurpassed in the Bristol area. It was not unreasonable to expect, therefore, that Shirehampton would eventually become a residential centre for those whose business brought them to Avonmouth Docks, and the forward spirits in the Society sought how they might permanently establish the movement in that district. Inquiries were made with reference to the purchase of property in Bradley Crescent. Negotiations were opened up with the owner, who, however, was not quick to embrace the opportunity, and while the matter remained thus in abeyance information was brought to the Committee that a more favourable property, known as the Chapel House Estate, was likely to be in the market for sale. Mr. Gilmore Barnett was interviewed, and discreet inquiries set on foot. One of the Committee was personally interested in this property, his father being the tenant, and, for fear of prejudicing the Society's position, this member was not informed as to the inquiries that were being made. An incautious remark made in his hearing, however, was sufficient to rouse suspicion, and it soon became known that the Society would be met with competitors for the property. When the auction took place the Committee adopted an ingenious ruse to secure themselves against "runners up." On their behalf, Mr. Sturge as well as Mr. Barnett was retained, the latter gentleman being instructed to bid as high as £700, and then leave Mr. Sturge to finish the bargaining. Mr. Barnett was known to be acting for the Society, and in the auction-room the Committee ostentatiously displayed their interest in him, no notice being taken of Mr. Sturge. The ruse was successful, outside bidding quickly ceased after Mr. Barnett reached his limit, and Mr. Sturge bought the property for £750, causing no little consternation when it was announced that he acted for the Co-operative Society.

The purchase of this property made it desirable that more capital should be invested by members, and a motion was brought forward at a Special Meeting in July to increase the minimum holding from £1 to £2. Objection

was taken to the method adopted to bring this matter forward, and the advice of the Co-operative Union was taken, with the result that the question was again brought forward in a definite manner in September, the following resolution being passed by 40 votes to 4 :—

That each individual member shall be required to hold at least two shares, one of which shall be transferable, and the remainder withdrawable.

At this meeting one gets the first indication that there was some friction occurring, a vote of confidence in the Manager and Secretary being passed. Obviously this would have been unnecessary but for some contrary feeling existing.

Two important developments must be referred to before we pass on. First, that in March the banking account of the Society was transferred to the C.W.S.; second, that a boundary line was fixed as between the Bristol and District Society and themselves, to prevent overlapping. The first was quite in keeping with the broader outlook in Co-operative matters which just then characterised the Society, and the second, no less significant in this respect, was following the lead of the Societies which bounded them on the east and south.

The decisions arrived at were similar to those between Bedminster and Bristol and District, and the boundary mutually agreed upon.

At the Forty-first Quarterly Meeting, held on November 3rd, 1902, the members resolved to guarantee £20 to the defence fund instead of £10 recommended by the Committee, an indication that there were some forward spirits among the general body. It was also decided at the same meeting to start boot repairing.

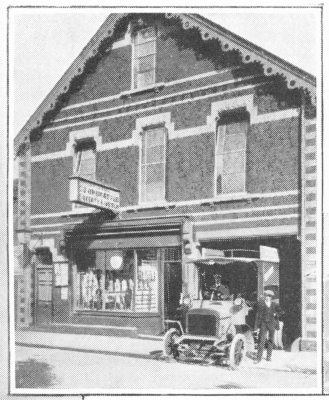
Difficulties now began to arise in respect to the possession of the Chapel House property. Through an oversight, proper notice was not given to the tenant; and, in consequence, the Society could not obtain the premises for their own purposes for twelve months. Meanwhile a craze for buying property seems to have infected the officials. Negotiations for the purchase of two cottages at Bradley Crescent were entered upon, but luckily did not

materialise. Then rumours began to spread that for the requirements of the railway in connection with the Docks the premises leased by the Society at Avonmouth would probably be swallowed up. At this time the land between Avonmouth and Shirehampton belonging to Mr. Napier Miles was being laid out for building, and plenty of suitable plots of ground were on offer. A site was accordingly selected, and Mr. Miles approached with a view to purchase. The position was a good one, a corner site, being but a short distance out of Avonmouth, facing the main road to Bristol, and extending some 90 feet along a side street intended for the erection of houses. The terms upon which the Society was to acquire the site included certain drastic conditions, the acceptance of which indicates the optimism of Avonmouth Co-operators at this period. The price asked was £50, and it was specifically laid down that the style of building must have the approval of the landowner's agent, that within ten years at least £2,000 must be laid out, not less than £1,000 within five years.

A Special Meeting was held on January 6th, 1903, to decide the matter, and by a substantial majority the members decided for the scheme.

But, in spite of such sanguine anticipations, it is evident that at the heart of things there were some forebodings, and these began to exhibit the usual symptoms—detailed criticisms, and strenuous efforts to effect changes in the administration. The necessity for more Co-operative education was admitted by all parties, and a pleasing feature of the controversies which lasted through 1903–4 were the frequent calls made for more light. The *Co-operative News* was recognised as a valuable aid in this respect, and two Committee-men were told off to procure additional subscribers. A demand was brought forward to have an Educational Committee formed, and this was at first met by a Sub-Committee of the General Committee being delegated to the work, but eventually a Special Committee was elected by the members.

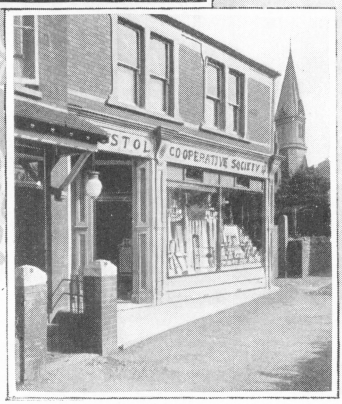
The Women's Guild Branch was much to the front. Three of their number had been elected to the General



MEADOW STREET BRANCH,
AVONMOUTH.



CHAPEL HOUSE,
SHIREHAMPTON.



PEMBROKE ROAD
BRANCH,
SHIREHAMPTON.

Committee in 1901, and early in 1903 one of their members headed the poll. Thus they were brought into very close touch with the internal organisation, and made effective use of their opportunities. They quickly rallied to their support those who had ideals, and who were prepared to experiment with a view to making these ideals immediately practical. They were opposed by those more cautious individuals—maybe no less idealistic, but strongly of opinion that to be practical is to be orthodox, or at least only to move with extreme care where fundamental arrangements are concerned. This cleavage was widened by the fact that there was no unanimity respecting the wisdom of launching out so heavily into the purchase of property. The older members were favourable, but the more recently elected were supremely anxious to concentrate attention upon un-Co-operative practices permitted in the management. Chief of these was the credit allowed in trading.

The Managing Secretary, in view of the increased financial burden looming ahead, inclined to the policy of non-interference. But his influence was considerably weakened by the fact that the members' debt list had so materially increased during the two years. The other fact, that membership and trade had increased in like proportion, was not held to be sufficient reason for a heavier outstanding account quarter after quarter, and efforts were made to stem the tide. In February, 1903, a proposal to divide the offices of Secretary and Manager was not favoured, but it was resolved to limit credit to one week's purchase of goods, except the last week in the quarter, all accounts to be settled at quarter end except in special cases. As was the case with the Bristol and District Society, these divisions of opinion led to criticism of internal affairs. Prices of goods were questioned, the Manager was accused of desiring to make too much profit. The private cost mark was called for, and Inspection Committees were appointed. The C.W.S., too, came in for its share of criticism, the officials being reckoned among those who would withhold information from the Committees. A letter was sent asking that at the C.W.S.

sales the prices of goods should be marked in plain figures. Altogether there was extreme touchiness prevailing, and parties were little disposed to compromise.

The balance sheet for the quarter ending April, 1903, only barely provided sufficient profit for the payment of the then customary dividend of 1s. 8d. The following quarter the position was slightly worse, and for the quarter ending October, 1903, a small amount had to be taken from the dividend equalisation fund to provide a dividend of 1s. 3d. A year previously there had been no difficulty in providing a 1s. 9d. dividend on a smaller trade, but in the meantime there had been a period of optimistic enthusiasm, and expenses had increased out of proportion to the increase in trade.

At the Quarterly Meeting on August 17th the trouble commenced. The opinion of the Co-operative Union had been taken respecting the two offices of Manager and Secretary being held by one person, and it was distinctly against the practice. "According to the rules, it was quite out of order," and the Committee were strongly advised to "put their affairs in line with the constitution by separating the offices at once."

This was complete justification for those who had been critical. Moreover, in spite of the regulation made respecting credit, the accounts owing by members still stood at the substantial figure of £393, or about one-third of the share-holding altogether. These facts told against the conservative party, and the Managing Secretary was discredited through his connection with them.

The members decided that a Secretary should be appointed, and steps were immediately taken to fill the post. Applications were invited through the *Co-operative News*, and in due course Mr. R. Anderson, from Bedlington, was appointed, Mr. Haigh being retained as Manager.

Considerable discussion arose at this juncture as to the position of the Secretary at Committee meetings in respect to voting. As an elected official it was claimed by some that he had a right to exercise this privilege. The matter was referred to the Co-operative Union, who confirmed the claim made, and, although an official engaged by the

Committee, through the fact of his office being subject to the election of the members, the Secretary was permitted to vote at Committee meetings.

The Quarterly Meeting held on November 16th, 1903, was a particularly stormy one. Strong criticisms were made as to the growth of members' debts. The Committee were called upon to enforce the rule that goods should be sold for cash. Both the Manager and the Committee were blamed, and charges of unfaithfulness were hurled across the floor by heated disputants. The hours of labour also came in for much comment. Previous to this, at the suggestion of the Women's Guild, a reduction had been effected, but as a result of this debate the old position was reverted to, notwithstanding vigorous protests from the Chairman and other champions of labour. The meeting lasted till nearly 11 p.m., and the net result was to intensify the bitterness which was fast dividing the Society into two camps, one *pro* and the other *anti*-Manager.

The discussion on the system of credit was continued in the Committee-room, and on November 26th, after a meeting lasting till nearly midnight, it was agreed by a majority of one that the Committee had no confidence in the Manager.

The immediate result of this decision was a request signed by twenty-eight members to call a Special General Meeting of the Society. This was dated December 2nd, and ten days later Mr. Haigh tendered his resignation.

The Special General Meeting was held on December 14th, and there was no little display of feeling. The members rallied to the Manager, and by a vote of 71 to 10 passed a resolution expressing their dissent from the Committee's action. The minority of 10, of course, included the six members of Committee who had supported the no-confidence resolution against the Manager. These immediately severed their connection with the Society, and some joined the Bristol and District. The balance of the Committee co-opted two others, and decided to carry on the business till the quarter end, and then submit themselves to the members. They reinstated

the Manager, and matters seemed as though they would settle pleasantly. Luckily, just prior to the Special Meeting, it had been decided to stop the payment of withdrawals of share capital for the remainder of the quarter, as the unrest which had been created began to express itself in applications from members for their investments.

On February 8th the balance sheet and Auditor's report were discussed. It was found that the profit again was short, and, as the Manager could offer no explanation, the meeting was adjourned for the attendance of the Auditor. This gentleman attended on February 11th, and confirmed the position.

After the Auditor had departed, the Committee seriously considered the situation, and eventually decided to give the Manager a week's notice from February 13th, and to advertise forthwith in the *Co-operative News* for a successor.

At the Quarterly Meeting held on February 17th, 1904, the Manager attended, and offered explanations as to his position, claiming that, in fairness, the stock should have been checked again before he was condemned. The meeting was not favourable to him, and went so far as to pass a resolution that an apology should be tendered to those of the Committee who had retired from the Society in consequence of the vote of censure previously passed. The letter was sent, but did not bring the wanderers back to the fold.

In their choice of men to fill the vacant post of Manager the Committee were peculiarly unfortunate. But for prompt action on the part of C.W.S. officials, who were watching the development of Avonmouth affairs with some anxiety, the position would have been given to a man who had at least once been convicted for defrauding a Society. Another choice was made, and the post accepted by an applicant from Portland; but here again a disappointment was in store, for the Portland Society's Committee prevailed upon their man to stay with them. Then a Mr. Alton was sent for from Honiton. This young man had been Manager of the opposition Society at Bedminster. Upon its break-up he had secured the position of Manager to a Society just

starting at Honiton, and at this time had been just one quarter at the last-named place. He was not a success at Avonmouth ; for six months there were constant changes of employés and complaints from members.

The Quarterly Meeting held in August, 1904, was a stormy one, and the question of amalgamation with the Bristol Societies was seriously proposed, but no action was definitely taken. A unique feature of this meeting was the admission of non-members, the Committee in their wisdom extending an invitation where shares were held by one member of a household to the rest of the family to attend as visitors. This might have been very well had matters been upon a more favourable basis, but it seems a little unfortunate that this invitation should have been extended at such an unsatisfactory period in the Society's history. Their prospects were anything but good, and the prevailing discontent was only intensified by being thus freely advertised.

The first action of the Committee after the Quarterly Meeting was to relieve the Manager of the Coal Department, and to make the Secretary responsible; at the same time instructing this latter official to supervise the shop in the Manager's absence.

On October 10th the Secretary handed in his resignation, and three days later Mr. Alton, too, resigned, having obtained a berth at another Society in Derbyshire.

In November the members were again called together. It was pointed out to them that as yet the financial position of the Society was sound, but more trade was essential in order to maintain that status. Amalgamation was again spoken of, but no resolution was passed. The Secretary having left, it was decided for the time being the books should be kept by the C.W.S., and the aid of that institution was sought to help to straighten out the Society's affairs. A Manager was procured from the Bristol and District Society (Mr. Rhodes), who immediately began to organise the business somewhat upon business lines. He had a colossal task, and it is to his great credit that the Committee began to appreciate their true position.

In spite of their difficulties there was still a feeling of optimism among the Committee. Applications for withdrawal of share capital were coming in fast, and, upon the advice of the Auditor, on November 28th a resolution was passed that no more applications should be considered. Notwithstanding this fact, the same evening it was resolved to accept the tender of £620 for building the shop at Shirehampton. Evidently, sanguine hopes were still entertained that things would right themselves. Not so among the members, however, for a requisition was brought forward asking that a Special Meeting be convened to discuss proposals for amalgamation with the Bristol and District Society.

On December 9th this meeting was held, and fifty-one members attended, forty-six of whom agreed to the appointment of a Committee of four to approach the Bristol and District Committee on the matter. These four, Messrs. Keats, George, Davis, and Wybourne, lost no time, and ten days later presented their report. This was favourable to amalgamation, subject to conditions—a graduated dividend for Shirehampton and Avonmouth, members' shares to be transferred on a basis to be ascertained by a valuation of assets. Arrangements were put in hand for these valuations to be made, Messrs. Tucker being asked to value the property, and the C.W.S. the stock. Meanwhile, building operations at Shirehampton were stayed, as it was anticipated that more extensive facilities might be afforded if the amalgamation was effected. The results were placed before the Committee on January 30th, 1905, and on the whole were satisfactory. An exception was taken to a depreciation of £103 in the stock. The C.W.S. representative explained that a valuation for the purposes of immediate sale meant that some stock would have to be taken by the purchaser for which the sale might be problematical, and allowance had to be made accordingly.

It is but fair to add that there were at this time substantial grounds for optimism, notwithstanding the unsatisfactory state of internal management. Throughout the whole period from October, 1902, to

January, 1905, share capital was being reduced and sales were dropping. Profits were fluctuating, but the reserve fund was being strengthened, and the members' debts greatly shrunk. This was a return to the earlier policy of the Society, which, throughout the term of Mr. Bugler's service as Secretary, never ceased to add quarter by quarter to the reserve fund. At the date of amalgamation this stood at nearly one-third of the share capital, and this really saved the situation, for in passing over the assets to Bristol and District the transaction was all to the good for the amalgamated Society, and there was no need to make terms.

The Special Meeting of members was held on February 22nd, 1905, when the resolutions for amalgamation with the Bristol and District Society were passed unanimously. On March 10th another meeting was held to confirm, and from that date Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society ceased to exist as a separate concern, becoming merged into the larger life of Co-operation in Bristol, with two Branch shops as the outward expression of that implied in the Co-operative ideal.

The passing of the Society was not permitted to take effect without a tribute of honour to the man who had stood by it from first to last, Mr. George Keats.

On Friday, September 7th, 1905, a great reunion of Avonmouth Co-operators took place, to present their friend and leader with an illuminated address. The Rev. F. J. Stanley, Mr. Alf Pearce, and Mr. John George spoke of Mr. Keats' excellent qualities and untiring devotion to the cause of Co-operation in particular and humanity in general.

The late Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett made the presentation. Speaking from his personal acquaintance with Mr. Keats, he said that their friend was a thorough Co-operator, as was also his wife, to whom he handed the presentation.

Mr. Keats, in his reply, paid a tribute to the help he had received in his work from his wife, in characteristic vein going on to thank his fellow-members for their kind appreciation. "He was glad to have done his duty to mankind as well, for he felt it was the duty of each and every one to try and leave the world a little better than they found it."

ROLL OF HONOUR.

SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

PRESIDENTS.

Mr. T. BARNARD	¾ year	1892 to 1893.
,, G. KEATS.....	11¾ years	1893 to 1905.

TREASURER.

Mr. G. NEWTON	2¾ years	1892 to 1895.
,, H. PARSLEY	½ ,,	1895 to 1896.
,, A. KELSEY	2 ,,	1903 to 1905.

SECRETARY.

Mr. J. H. BUGLER	7½ years	1892 to 1900.
,, A. C. BARNARD	¼ ,,	1900 to 1901.
,, A. E. PLUMLEY.....	¼ ,,	1901.
,, J. HAIGH.....	3 ,,	1901 to 1903.
,, R. ANDERSON.....	2 ,,	1903 to 1905.
,, J. GEORGE	¼ ,,	1905.

AUDITORS.

Mr. G. GAIT	7¾ years	1893 to 1901.
,, J. WHITE	4 ,,	1901 to 1905.

Also served one or two quarters each :—

Mr. A. BARNARD.	Mr. G. WHITEHEAD.
,, E. MATTHEWS.	,, G. KELSEY.
,, W. SMITH.	,, E. E. GAIT.
,, J. MORCOMBE.	,, J. Mc.CULLOCK.
,, E. T. ROBINSON.	,, F. S. STEVENS.
,, G. BARNARD.	,, J. GEORGE.
,, M. BURT.	

COMMITTEE-MEN.

Mr. A. PEARCE .....12¼ years		1892 to 1902, 1902 to 1905.
,, F. MURPHY ..... 7¼ ,,		1893 to 1894, 1895 to 1896, 1897 to 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903.
,, W. SMITH ..... 6¼ ,,		1894, 1896 to 1897, 1898 to 1899, 1900, 1902 to 1903.
F. NEADES ..... 6¼ ,,		1896 to 1897, 1898 to 1903.

MEMBERS OF THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES OF THE LATE SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.



Top Row : Messrs. E. F. Rowley, E. Hurley, J. Gould, W. R. Smith.
Second Row : Messrs. P. Smith, E. Billinghurst, F. Neades, S. Hurley, N. Pope, W. Prescott.
Third Row : Messrs. H. Room, W. H. Jackson, — Wines, A. Pearce, A. Barnard, J. George, J. B. Cook.
Fourth Row : Messrs. H. Geater, M. E. Prudhoe, Mrs. R. White, Mrs. M. Baker, Mrs. R. Young, Messrs. I. Young, F. Murphy.

COMMITTEE-MEN—*continued.*

Mr. S. HURLEY	5¾	years	1896 to 1897, 1899 to 1901, 1902 to 1903, 1904 to 1905.
,, H. ROOMS	5	,,	1896 to 1899, 1900 to 1901.
,, C. WRING	4¾	,,	1892 to 1896, 1900 to 1901.
,, G. WHITEHEAD	4½	,,	1892 to 1896.
,, E. HURLEY	4½	,,	1896 to 1897, 1901 to 1903, 1904.
,, A. KELSEY	3¾	,,	1899 to 1903.
,, J. W. GEORGE	3¼	,,	1901 to 1904.
,, YOUNG	2¾	,,	1900 to 1902.
,, G. COOK, senior	2¾	,,	1894, 1896 to 1897.
,, J. GOULD	2½	,,	1896 to 1897, 1899 to 1900.
,, J. A. WINES	2½	,,	1902 to 1905.
,, G. COOK, junior	2¼	,,	1900 to 1901, 1904 to 1905.
,, W. JACKSON	2¼	,,	1901 to 1902, 1904 to 1905.
,, A. BARNARD	2	,,	1892 to 1893, 1896.
,, S. HODGES	2	,,	1892 to 1894.
,, J. MORCAMBE	2	,,	1895 to 1896, 1899 to 1900.
Mrs. YOUNG	2	,,	1901 to 1903.
,, O. RICHARDS	2	,,	1901 to 1903.
,, R. WHITE	2	,,	1901 to 1902, 1903 to 1904.
Mr. H. STOKES	1¾	,,	1892 to 1894.
,, F. STEVENS	1¾	,,	1894 to 1896.
,, W. WESTLAKE	1¾	,,	1894, 1897.
,, W. BARNARD	1½	,,	1892 to 1893.
,, H. POINTING	1½	,,	1892 to 1893.
,, H. HACK	1¼	,,	1895 to 1896, 1899.

The following gentlemen and one lady, placed in the order their names first appear in the Society's balance sheets, have served for four quarters or less :—

Mr. A. COOK.
,, G. KEATS.
,, W. TUCKER.
,, T. BARNARD.
,, R. RAWLINGS.
,, G. PHILLIPS.
,, J. HATCHER.
,, A. WYBOURNE.
,, T. MORRIS.
,, G. BARNARD.
,, G. F. ROWLEY.
,, H. GEATER.
,, O. OSBORNE.
,, W. J. RICHARDS.
,, A. BOYD.
,, W. JONES.
Mr. J. CHALKES.
,, W. ROOM.
,, J. MC.CULLOCK.
,, E. HUTCHINGS.
,, A. ATKINS.
,, G. HUTCHINGS.
,, H. JENSON.
,, P. SMITH.
,, W. PRESCOTT.
,, E. PRUDHOE.
,, E. BILLINGHURST.
,, H. W. BAKER.
,, N. POPE.
,, J. MARCHANT.
Mrs. BAKER.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED. ESTABLISHED JUNE 29TH, 1892.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Oct., 1892	...	60	...	40	...	...	81	16	6/–	...	34
Dec., 1892	...	115	...	5	10	...	119	20	3	3	32
April, 1893	102	148	...	11	20	...	142	21	8	3	41
July, 1893	110	176	...	10	15	...	116	20	12	5	79
Sept., 1893	118	195	...	5	15	...	130	19	17	6	96
Dec., 1893	124	217	...	8	25	...	155	26	20	15	86
Mar., 1894	126	230	...	17	35	...	164	25	22	27	98
July, 1894	132	251	...	51	45	...	171	28	26	29	138
Sept., 1894	134	272	...	35	55	...	210	54	30	29	97
Dec., 1894	137	285	...	23	65	...	258	60	35	30	59
Mar., 1895	140	290	...	30	75	...	258	60	40	30	70
July, 1895	145	294	1	30	83	...	251	55	48	34	85
Oct., 1895	147	306	3	31	93	...	257	56	55	31	107
Jan., 1896	148	317	4	44	103	...	346	51	63	30	50
April, 1896	150	318	13	81	113	...	344	49	73	45	168
July, 1896	153	333	15	53	123	...	390	44	81	29	51
Sept., 1896	155	352	19	25	133	...	349	44	90	43	81
Dec., 1896	159	369	25	132	143	...	471	40	98	69	75
Mar., 1897	169	383	24	49	153	...	431	41	110	59	58
July, 1897	169	402	26	35	163	...	482	43	116	57	32
Oct., 1897	177	435	28	43	173	...	500	38	125	61	56
Dec., 1897	186	454	28	90	183	...	520	40	137	74	101
April, 1898	189	492	34	25	193	...	570	39	150	58	29
July, 1898	189	533	33	107	203	...	480	34	162	100	203
Oct., 1898	198	547	35	74	203	...	516	29	172	98	200

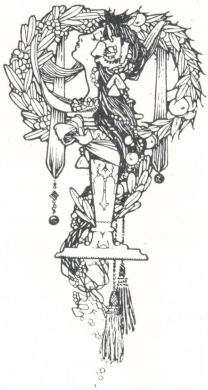
Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.								
				Net.	Interest on Capital.		Dividend.		Bonus to Employees.		Educational Purposes.	
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.		s. d.		£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
Oct., 1892	18	374	0 10 0	31	0 13 6		1 3		1 0 0		0 15 0	
Dec., 1892	27	620	1 10 0	45	1 0 0		1 3		1 10 0		0 15 0	
April, 1893	31	776	1 0 0	34	1 10 0		1 3		...		1 0 0	
July, 1893	37	821	1 0 0	30	1 15 0		1 0		...		1 0 0	
Sept., 1893	37	829	1 10 0	52	2 0 0		1 3		...		1 10 0	
Dec., 1893	36	798	1 10 0	51	2 0 0		1 3		0 14 0		1 10 0	
Mar., 1894	32	754	1 10 0	52	3 0 0		1 3		...		1 10 0	
July, 1894	32	766	1 10 0	55	3 0 0		1 3		...		1 10 0	
Sept., 1894	46	820	5 0 0	58	3 0 0		1 4		...		1 10 0	
Dec., 1894	51	870	5 0 0	68	3 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Mar., 1895	51	835	5 0 0	65	3 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
July, 1895	54	832	5 0 0	64	3 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Oct., 1895	55	883	5 0 0	70	3 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Jan., 1896	57	950	5 0 0	72	3 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
April, 1896	56	933	10 0 0	70	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
July, 1896	57	965	5 0 0	71	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Sept., 1896	59	990	5 0 0	75	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Dec., 1896	58	1007	5 0 0	79	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Mar., 1897	60	1145	5 0 0	84	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
July, 1897	67	1200	5 0 0	99	4 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Oct., 1897	67	1331	5 0 0	95	5 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Dec., 1897	70	1392	5 0 0	116	5 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
April, 1898	72	1426	5 0 0	103	5 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
July, 1898	74	1326	5 0 0	101	6 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	
Oct., 1898	73	1372	5 0 0	114	6 0 0		1 6		...		1 10 0	

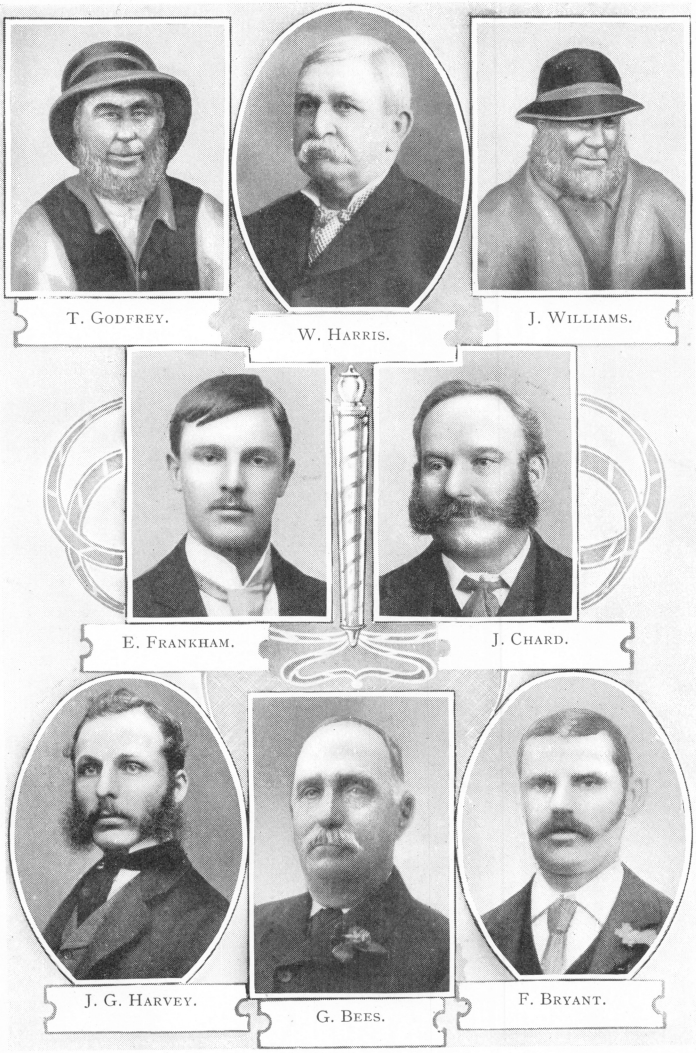
STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED—*continued.*

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Dec., 1898.....	209	595	39	69	201	...	590	24	184	90	163
April, 1899.....	221	615	54	102	211	...	632	25	202	85	170
July, 1899.....	225	617	42	58	221	...	563	76	217	171	30
Oct., 1899.....	230	644	50	111	231	...	539	99	231	200	87
Jan., 1900.....	231	667	61	198	241	...	662	130	245	198	35
April, 1900.....	231	641	51	129	225	...	563	125	272	201	54
July, 1900.....	234	589	44	203	251	...	557	123	279	185	25
Oct., 1900.....	239	576	45	169	267	...	511	127	301	208	26
Jan., 1901.....	244	582	34	203	277	...	506	111	314	236	29
April, 1901.....	248	553	45	168	260	...	559	106	235	212	44
July, 1901.....	254	568	36	182	287	...	519	103	252	197	56
Oct., 1901.....	254	610	47	193	247	...	574	105	269	197	58
Jan., 1902.....	256	591	50	278	247	...	664	102	282	213	43
April, 1902.....	269	632	66	231	250	...	688	112	302	189	41
July, 1902.....	294	675	71	202	250	...	786	116	213	220	41
Oct., 1902.....	326	744	82	344	255	...	937	134	248	268	14
Jan., 1903.....	358	934	71	497	255	...	1082	245	275	343	23
April, 1903.....	378	1127	100	524	260	601	1208	959	308	343	119
July, 1903.....	392	1201	99	558	260	716	1214	949	340	393	135
Oct., 1903.....	410	1288	120	554	263	709	1272	939	384	393	88
Jan., 1904.....	415	1268	64	655	269	701	1274	932	415	337	47
April, 1904.....	412	1219	64	413	272	607	1216	930	281	266	10
July, 1904.....	417	1212	212	253	296	600	1220	931	305	194	11
Oct., 1904.....	415	1178	60	597	304	600	1320	921	299	166	56
Jan., 1905.....	418	1111	43	614	307	600	1055	939	319	164	176

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.								
				Net.	Interest on Capital.			Dividend.		Bonus to Employees.	Educational Purposes.		
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.			s. d.		£	£ s. d.		
Dec., 1898.....	79	1562	5 0 0	148	7 0 0			1 8		...	3 0 0		
April, 1899.....	81	1597	5 0 0	135	7 0 0			1 8		...	3 0 0		
July, 1899.....	75	1482	10 0 0	122	7 0 0			1 8		...	3 0 0		
Oct. 1899.....	75	1484	15 0 0	120	7 0 0			1 8		...	3 0 0		
Jan. 1900.....	86	1591	5 0 0	85	7 0 0			1 6		...	3 0 0		
April, 1900.....	88	1565	5 0 0	140	7 0 0			1 6		...	3 0 0		
July, 1900.....	91	1462	5 0 0	107	7 0 0			1 6		...	3 0 0		
Oct., 1900.....	96	1600	5 0 0	113	6 0 0			1 6		...	3 0 0		
Jan., 1901.....	102	1721	5 0 0	47	7 0 0			1 0		...	...		
April, 1901.....	80	1609	5 0 0	133	6 0 0			1 6		...	0 10 0		
July, 1901.....	84	1519	3 0 0	57	7 0 0			1 6		...	...		
Oct., 1901.....	82	1543	3 0 0	97	7 0 0			1 6		...	1 0 0		
Jan., 1902.....	88	1674	3 0 0	125	7 0 0			1 8		...	2 0 0		
April, 1902.....	110	1985	3 0 0	133	7 0 0			1 8		...	...		
July, 1902.....	112	2080	3 0 0	154	7 0 0			1 9		...	2 0 0		
Oct., 1902.....	127	2397	4 0 0	161	8 0 0			1 9		...	...		
Jan., 1903.....	153	2807	4 0 0	198	10 0 0			1 9		...	3 0 0		
April, 1903.....	166	3053	10 0 0	203	12 0 0			1 8		...	...		
July, 1903.....	166	2911	10 0 0	185	14 0 0			1 8		...	...		
Oct., 1903.....	167	2560	10 0 0	131	14 0 0			1 3		...	...		
Jan., 1904.....	180	2489	10 0 0	51	13 0 0			0 6		...	...		
April, 1904.....	158	1884	10 0 0	135	13 0 0			1 0		...	10 0 0		
July, 1904.....	149	1759	10 0 0	70	13 0 0			1 0		...	...		
Oct., 1904.....	149	1754	10 0 0	23	14 0 0			0 4		...	...		
Jan., 1905.....	154	1918	16 0 0	*	...			...		...	...		

* Loss £104.





PIONEERS AND OFFICIALS OF KEYNSHAM CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Keynsham Co-operative Society Limited.

THE Keynsham Co-operative Society was born out of the missionary enthusiasm of the leaders at Bedminster. On September 13th, 1894, Mr. J. T. Hopkins, accompanied by Mr. A. E. Bullock and Mr. E. Grey, called on Mr. W. Harris, an old shopmate of Mr. Hopkins. A few minutes' conversation on the topic of Co-operation for Keynsham convinced Mr. Harris that this was an opportunity to be embraced. Accordingly, he promptly introduced the Bedminster trio to his friends Messrs. J. Williams, F. Dovey, and J. G. Harvey. The party then adjourned to the back parlour of the Crown Inn, where, for an hour or more, the enthusiasts dilated upon the benefits and possibilities of Co-operation. Eventually it was decided to call a meeting for the week following to see what could be done to form a Society.

With minds aflame with bright hopes for the future, Mr. Harris and his friends accompanied the missionaries to the station, on the way being joined by two others, Messrs. T. Williams and T. R. Tucker. Nothing loth, these two were enlisted for the project, and, whilst waiting for the train, some practical soul suggested, " No time like the present," and forthwith the six handed over 1s. each to Mr. Tucker, who promised to act as Treasurer, and thus the Keynsham Co-operative Society was started.

A week later a public meeting was called at the Old Free School, and about forty persons attended. The same three missionaries were present, and addressed the

meeting. As a result it was agreed that a Co-operative Society should be formed, and some twenty names were handed in as prospective members. The following Committee-men and Officers were elected: President, Mr. W. Harris; Secretary, Mr. J. G. Harvey; Treasurer, Mr. W. Pitt; Committee, Messrs. T. Williams, Z. W. Hall, J. Williams, E. Neat, T. Godfrey, T. Newman, A. Tipney, G. Bees, Mrs. J. L. Packer, and Messrs. J. Chard, W. Allen, F. Bryant, T. Bourton.

On October 3rd a meeting of members was held for the purpose of passing the rules. The model rules of the Co-operative Union were taken as a basis. Mr. Bullock was present at this meeting.

From that date the Committee met weekly, premises were taken, and the Stores opened for business on November 23rd, 1894.

The opening was made the occasion for a tea party; friends from Bedminster, Bristol and District, and Gloucester Societies attended, and made inspiring addresses to these young beginners in Co-operation.

The premises which had been selected for a Store, although on the main road, were not situate in the shopping part of the village. Moreover, except for the wares which occasionally embellished the front windows, there was nothing to distinguish it from the neighbouring cottages. These Keynsham Co-operators were modest folk throughout the whole of their career. They catered for themselves, and only themselves, in their own way. They made members, it is true, for starting with forty, and a quarterly turnover of £133, in three years they had increased their membership to sixty-two, and their sales to £242. The progression was quite rational. Beyond an occasional flutter in potatoes, they were strictly "hand-to-mouth" dealers.

The business was closely supervised by the Committee, who, week by week, met in the room beside their little Store house to discuss ways and means. But the real

detail of the business was left in the hands of Mr. Harvey (Secretary), who was assisted by sound, practical advice from his wife, and for a large part of the time, in the actual dispensing of wares, by his daughter. While it is not quite correct to say that the Society was run by the Harvey family, it is without doubt a fact that, but for this unique Co-operative effort by these three or four individuals, there might have been difficulty in carrying on the business.



KEYNSHAM OLD SHOP.

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey themselves do quite a considerable business in distributing newspapers and magazines, and are consequently well known in the neighbourhood. Besides, from their connection with newspapers and other avenues of general information, being of some considerable importance in the village, it is not surprising that the Harvey family should be trusted to do all that was right and honourable in Co-operative affairs, and the quiet but steady progress which was made testifies to the faithfulness with which they discharged their various duties.

Another staunch friend to the Society was Mr. Harris, "Bill Harris," as he is termed by those within the pale. For the large part of the time he was President. But he was more, for, being in the milk trade, he supplied the members with milk, allowing the Society a discount on the transaction. This has been continued since the amalgamation, and Mr. Harris, in his whole-hearted sympathy for the movement, recommends those of his customers who are not members to join the Store and share

in the profits. It was Mr. Harris, too, who fetched the goods from Bristol to the Store, minimising the cost of carriage to the Society.

Mr. Jack Williams, another of the pioneers, also stood by the Society in storm and stress. And even now, unconvinced as to the wisdom of amalgamation, still does his part to make the Co-operative Branch at Keynsham respond to the best traditions of the old Store.

These few enthusiasts and some others tended the Keynsham Society as a mother tends her child; they encountered difficulties as all such earnest souls must, but they were not discouraged. Experiments they made, some of which were successful, some of which were not. For a short period they cured their own bacon, but with somewhat disastrous results. Unsaleable cuts quickly accumulated, and during the hot weather sides "went off." It is still remembered that a council of ways and means was called to seal the fate of some hundredweights of their "home cured," which ended in a pilgrimage to the back garden, and there the unsavoury meats were consigned to Mother Earth. After that experience, no more pigs were taken from members, but, to be as Co-operative as possible, a weekly order was placed with the Trowbridge Co-operators, who are experienced curers.

At one time the Keynsham Co-operators were very nearly congratulating themselves that they had captured a prize in the person of a member who had once been a grocer. Promptly this individual was made a Committeeman, and his advice was accordingly appreciated. With some misgivings, acting on this friend's initiative, a box of 4d. currants was made to serve for 5d. as well. As fate would have it, the first customer to buy 5d. currants was this gentleman's wife, and the circumstance was made such occasion for chaff that the deception leaked out among the members, and this was the first and last attempt made to copy the methods of the "smart" trader.

Almost from the commencement, arrangements were made with a butcher and a baker, of creditable local reputation, to supply the Society's members with meat and bread, allowing the Society a sufficient percentage to cover dividend. The Society undertook responsibility for the individual transactions, but such were the arrangements that this responsibilty was merely nominal. In order to trade through the Society, members had to purchase tokens beforehand from the Store, these being tendered to the purveyor in lieu of cash, and the Society settled accounts according to the tokens brought to them.

Generally speaking Keynsham Co-operators were fortunate; "ups and downs" did not come their way. One quarter only were they troubled with a loss, and that, a matter of £12 to £14, due to the dishonesty of a young woman who decamped with the contents of the till.

In its way Keynsham was quite a pattern Society. The members were dealing members, and they were paying members; the Society neither gave nor took long credit. Orders for goods required were made up weekly, and with slight exceptions purchases were confined to the C.W.S., and in its humble way the Society prospered exceedingly. But all the time they were being hemmed in by the large and enterprising Societies, not only Bedminster, but East Twerton and Radstock, each of which was catering more extensively, and paying a larger dividend than could possibly be done by Keynsham. Further, the extension of tramways outwards from both Bath and Bristol not only afforded opportunities for shopping in either place, but pointed to the possible absorption of Keynsham at some future date.

It was through Mr. Justham, then traveller, now grocery buyer for the Bristol Depôt of the C.W.S., that the idea of amalgamation with Bedminster was first put forward. This gentleman, visiting the Committee in the summer of 1896, recommended that steps be taken to bring about a union of forces, Keynsham to become a

Branch of Bedminster. The Committee were favourable, but, before making advances officially to Bedminster, felt it their duty to consult Messrs. Hopkins and Bullock, who were mainly responsible for the birth of Keynsham Society. These gentlemen, however, would not commit themselves to definitely advise, though Mr. Hopkins rather significantly remarked that "he believed in self-government." Thrown back upon themselves, the Committee found that out of their quota of eleven they had eight in favour, and at a General Meeting of members only two were unfavourable. The Bedminster Society was accordingly approached to take over Keynsham and work the Society as a Branch.

The Bedminster members were not ready to consider the matter, and, if anything, were inclined to resent the suggestion. They adjourned the question for six months. Eventually, we know they refused the call, and the Keynsham friends applied themselves to their own affairs again, nothing daunted that their neighbours were subject to limitation in respect to the Co-operative ideal.

None the less, the question was never allowed to drop, and gradually people became familiarised with the idea. But the shadow of that refusal hung over the officials of both Societies, and for another eight years Keynsham struggled manfully on.

In 1904 the shop management was practically in the hands of Miss Ethel Harvey, who for some considerable time had been desirous of seeking "fresh woods and pastures new." An opening occurring with a small Society in Oxfordshire, the C.W.S. traveller recommended and secured the post for her. This was just about the time that negotiations were opening up between Bedminster and the Bristol and District Societies.

The opportunity was too good to be lost. The difficulty of finding a suitable person to take charge of their little shop, and the need for a more enterprising policy, inclined the Committee towards another attempt

to become incorporated with the larger concern. Negotiations were accordingly opened up with Bedminster, and this time with more satisfactory results. The necessary resolutions were passed by the members of both Societies, and by the midsummer of 1905 the Keynsham Society had ceased to be, yielding up its separate life to become part of Bedminster, and later of the Bristol Co-operative Society, whose few years of progress have now to be recorded.



STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF KEYNSHAM AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.				
		Share.	Loans, Including Bank Overdraft.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Fix-tures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Feb., 1895.....	40	38	...	23	...	...	40	3	...	...	27
May, 1895.....	...	41	...	9	...	...	49	4	2	...	6
Aug., 1895.....	...	40	...	14	4	...	51	4	4	...	6
Nov., 1895.....	43	44	...	4	4	...	45	5	5	...	8
Mar., 1896.....	46	47	...	23	5	...	56	12	7	...	14
June, 1896.....	51	52	...	...	5	...	52	12	8	...	3
Sept., 1896.....	51	56	...	...	6	...	62	11	9	...	...
Dec., 1896.....	54	64	...	24	7	...	79	11	10	...	17
Mar., 1897.....	62	67	...	27	8	...	75	10	12	...	27
June, 1897.....	62	74	...	...	9	...	75	9	13	...	8
Sept., 1897.....	62	71	...	...	10	...	75	9	15	...	2
Dec., 1897.....	62	71	...	...	10	...	73	9	17	...	2
Year ended—											
Dec., 1898.....	67	79	...	...	12	...	58	8	22	6	...
,, 1899.....	64	75	...	...	13	...	56	6	32	6	...
,, 1900.....	60	77	...	...	11	...	64	8	41	6	...
,, 1901.....	63	79	...	24	14	...	65	6	51	3	17
,, 1902.....	64	103	...	4	14	...	64	5	74	...	...
,, 1903.....	64	103	...	...	14	...	69	5	77	...	...
,, 1904.....	60	56	54	...	14	...	70	6	45	3	...

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.				
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus.	Educational Purposes.
	£	£	£ s. d.	£	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Feb., 1895.....	5	133	...	10	0 10 0	1 3	...	0 10 0
May, 1895.....	6	138	...	9	0 10 0	1 3	...	...
Aug., 1895.....	6	127	...	8	0 10 0	1 2	...	...
Nov., 1895.....	6	139	...	10	0 10 0	1 3	...	0 10 0
Mar., 1896.....	6	194	0 10 0	13	0 10 0	1 3	...	0 10 0
June, 1896.....	7	211	1 0 0	16	0 10 0	1 4	...	0 15 0
Sept., 1896.....	7	219	0 15 0	17	0 10 0	1 4	...	0 10 0
Dec., 1896.....	8	259	1 0 0	24	0 12 0	1 4	...	0 15 0
Mar., 1897.....	7	263	...	21	0 14 6	1 5	...	1 0 0
June, 1897.....	8	268	0 15 0	20	0 15 6	1 4	...	0 10 0
Sept., 1897.....	8	233	...	16	0 15 0	1 4	...	0 5 0
Dec., 1897.....	8	242	...	15	0 13 9	1 3	...	...
Year ended—								
Dec., 1898.....	38	848	1 0 0	39	3 0 0	0 11	...	...
,, 1899.....	43	854	2 0 0	45	3 0 0	...	...	...
,, 1900.....	33	843	...	31	2 0 0	1 0	...	...
,, 1901.....	35	917	2 0 0	62	3 0 0	1 2	...	...
,, 1902.....	35	923	...	56	3 0 0	1 4	...	...
,, 1903.....	38	1021	...	63	4 0 0	1 4	...	...
,, 1904.....	41	961	...	60	2 0 0	1 4	...	...



CHAPTER XXVII.

The Bristol Co-operative Society Limited.

THE Bristol Co-operative Society Limited is the latest product in the evolution of Co-operation in Bristol. In its youth, it answered not to one name, but four. In its prime it stands compactly welded into a united whole, with single aim and purpose, and presenting a solid front to the forces of competitive origin which ere long may gather for the final fray. The story of this amalgamation of four Societies is both instructive and interesting.

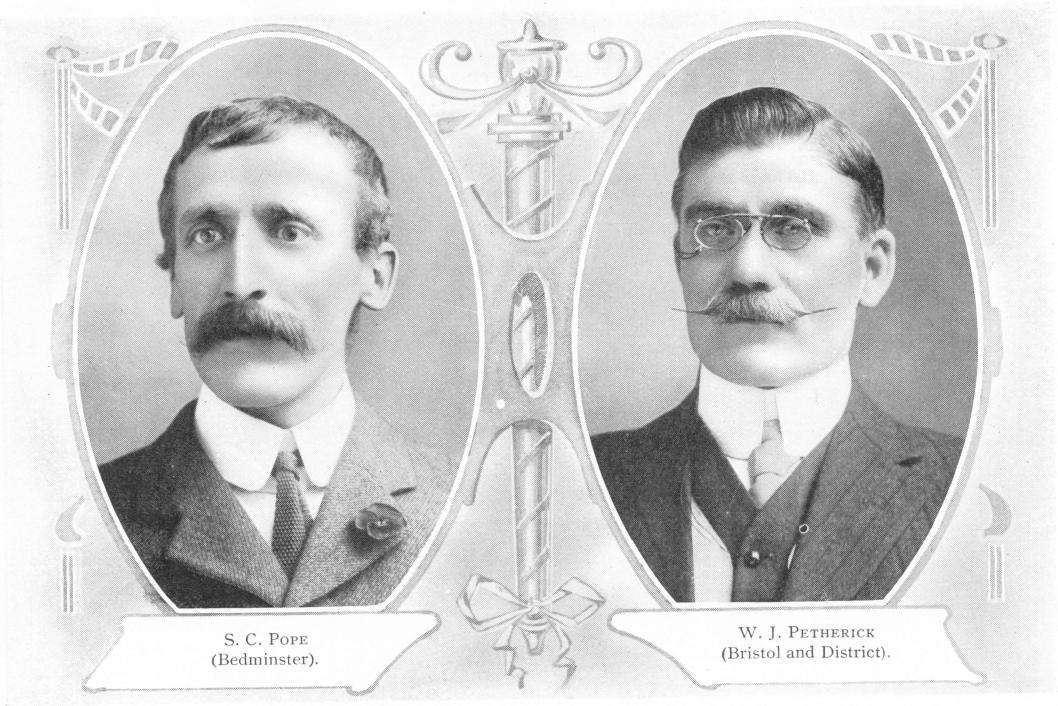
Little did Mr. Hallett, of Menheniot, and his friend Mr. J. F. Hopkins think, when they read their papers on "District Associations," in 1891 and 1892, that they were laying a train fraught with such consequences; but they were really pioneers in more respects than one. The association of members from the local Societies in conferences made for fraternity. The feelings engendered by such comradeship made easy the settlement of questions which might have been vexed. Overlapping, to wit. It made for joint action in matters of mutual interest, as, for instance, conferences with trade union officials, and, at a later date, Annual Festivals and Labour Fêtes.

Officially, the proposals for the amalgamation of Bristol and District and Bedminster Societies were not submitted to the respective bodies of members till December, 1903; but for some considerable period before then the question had been discussed by prominent leaders in both Societies. Common sense and the general welfare

pointed strongly in the direction of amalgamation; but there were some interests which might, perhaps, obstruct, and it was by no means certain that the general body of Co-operators in Bristol were favourable to the idea. The raising of such an issue might have made or marred a reputation, but it had to be done, and honour is due to Mr. W. J. Petherick (Bristol and District) and Mr. S. C. Pope (Bedminster) for having the courage to test the feelings of their fellow-members. The result would make it appear that doubts were superfluous. The members unhesitatingly agreed to the principle. Still, there was a good way to go yet. Many a principle has been wrecked upon the rocks of detail in the seas of expediency. A good deal of fencing took place between the two Committees before a Joint Committee could be got to work in May, 1904. This Committee was composed of the combination of the two Societies' Committees, with Mr. A. E. Bullock acting as Secretary.

The first definite step taken was to write the Co-operative Union for advice as to methods of procedure, also for reference to the experience of other Societies. Having obtained these, the hammering out of details began. Neither Society was prepared to yield one iota of advantage to the other; and at one time it seemed as though the faith each had in the superiority of its own would preclude any possibility of arriving at a common basis for negotiation. At last it was suggested by an enthusiast, just as a preliminary basis for practical operations, that it might be conceded, in the management of the new Society, the members of the two Committees should sit together, and that separate sets of accounts should be prepared, as it were, for the two districts; this to continue for nine months, during which time profits were to be allocated according to the results accruing to the operations in each district. This proposal was accepted, and a way then opened for the real business to be discussed.

Obviously, nothing could be done without first ascertaining the financial position of each Society in such a manner as to be acceptable to both of them. There had



MOVERS OF THE RESOLUTION *RE* AMALGAMATION.

to be joint valuations of assets and a joint audit. Accordingly, Messrs. Nichols, Howes, and Co. were appointed to value each Society's buildings, land, fixed and rolling stock, and the C.W.S. was asked to value the stock in trade; the Auditors of both Societies being instructed to audit the accounts, jointly, when prepared.

The report of these valuations was submitted to Bristol and District members on December 10th, 1904, and to Bedminister members three days later. There can be no doubt the results were somewhat surprising to both Societies, for, notwithstanding the apparently greater prosperity of Bristol and District, the Bedminister assets, in spite of—perhaps, by reason of—their difficulties, were in a much healthier condition. So far as stocks in trade were concerned, the valuation practically agreed with the figures in the Societies' balance sheets. But the valuation of property, while being very favourable to Bedminster, was anything but satisfactory to Bristol and District. Whereas Bedminster was shown to have £389 worth in excess of their balance sheet estimation, Bristol and District had £1,397 worth less than theirs.

Fortunately, this did not complete the investigations. The Auditors had to deal with the position as a whole; and, on March 10th, 1905, they presented their report, which was nothing but thoroughly satisfactory to both Societies. Therein it was shown that Bristol and District could claim an excess of assets over liabilities to the extent of £609, and Bedminster £740, so that upon the two Societies being amalgamated they could count on a reserve fund of £1,349.

It was now quite evident that there was no need for the cumbersome method of adjustment before referred to. The Societies could amalgamate upon terms of absolute equality. But, strange as it may appear, this very satisfactory conclusion all but came to wrecking the scheme. A demand immediately arose in Bedminster for district representation on the Committee of the new Society. In the words of its promoters, the question no

longer had reference to the taking over of a weak Society by a strong one. This valuation had shown both Societies to be of equal standing, and unless safeguards were introduced the larger membership of the one would outvote the other.

As the date for the Special Meetings of the two Societies approached these mutterings grew louder and louder. On the eve of the meeting itself the Bedminster Committee met and discussed the situation. It looked like a crisis, and so it was. The leaders were divided, and thus they went to the meeting on May 20th.

The Chairman (Mr. A. Bullock) moved the proposals, which had been set forth in a circular issued to all the members, as follows:—

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION BETWEEN THE BRISTOL AND DISTRICT AND BEDMINSTER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION.

This Society and the Bedminster Co-operative Society Limited shall be amalgamated on the conditions following :—

1. The name of the amalgamated Society shall be the Bristol Co-operative Society Limited.

2. The rules of the amalgamated Society shall be the Co-operative Union Model Rules, subject to special rules to be hereafter submitted to members of the amalgamated Society.

3. All the members of each of the above-named Societies at the time when this resolution is registered shall be members of the amalgamated Society, each of whom respectively shall be credited in the books of the Society with the like amount of shares, share capital, loans, deposits, dividend and interest, as are standing to his or her credit in the books of the Society of which he or she is a member at the said date.

4. The amalgamated Society shall be credited with all the assets of the above-named Societies at the date of the registration of this resolution, and shall undertake all the obligations affecting either of the said Societies at such date.

CONDITIONS.

1. In the event of this resolution being registered by the Registrar, the respective Societies shall cease to exist as separate Societies on the 26th day of July, 1905, and shall be opened and worked as one Society on the 27th day of July, 1905.

2. That the two Societies amalgamate on equal terms.

3. The stocks of each of the Societies shall be taken in the usual way on the date first-named, each Society having agreed to abide by the result of such stocktaking, and the books shall be closed and balanced on the same date. The buildings, fixtures, plant, &c., shall be taken at the value as per last balance sheet, less the usual deductions for depreciation.

4. Dividend and interest for current three months shall be paid by the amalgamated Society to the members of each Society according to the results ascertained at the separate balance of their respective accounts.

5. The balance sheets of each of the Societies shall be examined and compared with their books by the respective Auditors, and the signature of the said Auditors to the respective balance sheets shall be a satisfactory and sufficient guarantee of the accuracy thereof.

6. The respective September Quarterly Meetings of the members of the separate Societies shall be held for the passing of the respective balance sheets.

7. The first meeting of the amalgamated Societies shall be held on September 16th, 1905, when the business on the agenda connected therewith shall be discussed and disposed of.

8. That the Bristol and District principle of voting be adopted for the election of officers, subject to the question of district representation being considered at the revision of rules.

9. That until more central premises be secured the registered offices be at Co-operative Buildings, Lawrence Hill.

10. That the respective Committees as constituted at the end of the June quarter, 1905, shall act together as the Committee of Management for the amalgamated Society until December Quarterly Meeting, when six shall retire and five to be elected to include President and Vice-President, and at each of the succeeding Quarterly

Meetings six shall retire and four to be elected until the number of Committee shall consist of seventeen, including President and Vice-President.

11. That the Secretary of Bristol and District be appointed General Secretary of the amalgamated Society, and the Secretary of Bedminster be appointed Assistant Secretary, the latter with a guarantee for a term of five years in the said office.

12. That no employé of either Society shall suffer reduction in their wages as a result of amalgamation.

Mr. Bullock spoke forcibly in favour of settling the question of amalgamation by passing these proposals. While agreeing in a measure with district representation, that was a minor consideration which might be dealt with by the rules. He was ably seconded by Mr. S. C. Pope. But nothing availed; for the moment the reactionaries triumphed. The requisite three-fourths majority was not obtained by four votes, the votes being 284 for to 100 against the proposals.

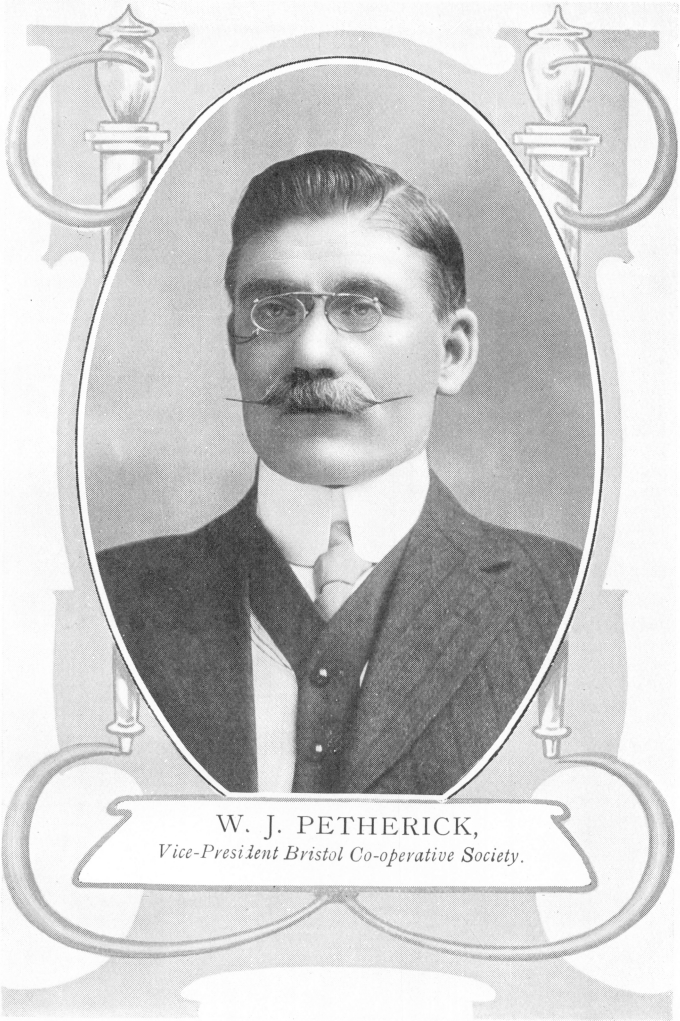
The crisis had indeed come, for to have permitted the matter to rest there might have seriously affected the Society if it continued in isolation. The possibility of their tactics being successful, and the resulting consequences, had, perhaps, not entered the minds of the dissentients; for, after all, they had been outvoted by nearly three to one, and it was unthinkable that their opinions should rule.

A requisition, signed by 223 members, calling for another Special Meeting on June 17th, was promptly sent to the Committee, who, on proving fifty of the signatures, issued the notices, and on that date the question was again debated. On this occasion it was Ald. John Curle, J.P., who led the debate in a powerful appeal to unite the Co-operative forces in Bristol. Mr. Bullock seconded, and Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett strongly supported the proposals. In a meeting of 395 members the vote was fairly decisive, being 323 for and 70 against, two papers being spoilt, this being 27 in excess of the necessary three-fourths majority. The resolution was declared carried.



J. MARKS,

President Bristol Co-operative Society.



W. J. PETHERICK,
Vice-President Bristol Co-operative Society.

Meanwhile the Bristol and District Society had held their Special Meeting on May 27th, and had decided in favour. The total number of votes registered were:—

	For.	Against.	Spoilt Papers.
Bristol and District ...	358	30	4
Bedminster	323	70	2
Total	681	100	6

This was a most unmistakable evidence in favour of the step. A small minority persisted in their opposition to the end. These few lost no opportunity to prevent the amalgamation from taking effect. As a last testimony to their obstinacy, both before and after the Special Meetings, exception was taken to the notices which convened those meetings, that the terms of the resolution were not sufficiently explicit. This objection, which seemed to have some foundation in fact, led to correspondence with the Co-operative Union and an interview with the Registrar-General, resulting in the acquiescence of the latter to the decision come to by the majority. The resolutions were duly confirmed by the members of both Societies in June, 1905; and, after completion of the quarter then in progress, on July 27th, the various Branches of both Societies commenced business as Branches of the Bristol Co-operative Society Limited.

But much more had to be done before the amalgamation could be completed. As yet the arrangements, although legally proper and binding, were but superficial and preliminary so far as the true life of the Society was concerned. Ideals and methods had to be adjusted if any practical good was to accrue from the mere mechanical passing of resolutions required by law.

The first step was to harmonise the rules. It will be remembered that the Bristol and District Society had delayed the revision of their rules pending the negotiations, but the information which the Rules Revision Committee had gleaned was now available for the purposes of the new Society. Without hesitation it was resolved to adopt

for general purposes the model rules of the Co-operative Union, and a most comprehensive list of special rules was drawn up and discussed by the members at Special Meetings held on September 16th, 23rd, and 30th. Pending election at the first Quarterly Meeting, it was decided that Mr. H. A. Carter should take the chair. In passing, it may be noted that this decision was confirmed at the Quarterly Meeting, when Mr. Carter was returned unopposed as first President of the Bristol Co-operative Society.

Prior to the passing of rules, recommendations from the Committee were assented to by the members assembled:—

1. That a sum of £5 be granted to the Secretary of the Amalgamation Committee for services rendered.

2. That Committee fees shall be paid as follows:—

General or Sub-Committees	1/-	per meeting.
Sub-Committee Secretaries, for writing up minutes, extra	1/-	,,
Other Meetings—		
Saturday afternoon	2/6	,,
Other afternoon	5/-	,,
All day	10/-	,,
Stocktaking	3/-	,,

3. That Monthly Meetings should be continued.

4. That a contingency fund should be recognised, and that 1 per cent of the net profits should be set aside each quarter for the purposes of this fund, to be administered by a Committee consisting of three members of the General Committee and three members appointed from the Annual Meeting of the Society.

Monthly Meetings were not passed without opposition, but the enthusiasm of the old Bristol and District members for these fixtures at length carried the meeting with them. This was but following up what had been a practice in the Bristol and District, and what had been adopted upon occasion by Bedminster Societies. These matters were easily disposed of in the first meeting. It required two

further adjournments to pass the special rules. As finally amended the most important of these were as follows:—

THE SPECIAL RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

I.—*The name* of this society is the BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

II.—*The special objects* of the society are to carry on the trade of general dealers, both retail and wholesale, and manufacturers of any article so dealt in as any general meeting may direct or authorise.

III.—*The registered office* of the society shall be at Co-operative Buildings, Lawrence Hill, Bristol, in the county of Gloucester.

IV.—*The society* shall include all persons on the list of members at the time when these rules are registered, and all such other persons as the committee may admit from time to time.

V.—*A member* who does not give notice of any change of address within one calendar month after it is made shall be fined sixpence.

VI.—*All securities* shall be signed by three members of the committee, and countersigned by the secretary.

IX.—*The ordinary general meetings* of the society shall be held on the second Saturday in March, June, September, and December in each year, at 7-30 p.m.; and all places of business of the society shall be closed not later than 7 o'clock on such nights.

X.—

(*a*) *In the case of a special general meeting* being convened by requisition, it shall require the signatures of not less than 200 members.

(*b*) *Notice of a special general meeting* shall be sufficiently given if placed in a conspicuous position in each place of business (stating the object for which it is called), at least fourteen days prior to such meeting.

(*c*) *The quorum* of a general meeting shall be fifty members present within half-an-hour of the time fixed for such meeting.

(*d*) *No member* shall be admitted to any general meeting without producing his or her pass book.

XI.—*At each general meeting* scrutineers shall be appointed by show of hands, whose duty shall be, when a ballot is taken, to distribute and collect the ballot papers, count the votes, and make known the result through the chairman.

XII.—

(*a*) *The committee* shall consist of the president, vice president, and fifteen committee-men.

(*b*) *They shall* retire and be elected as follows:—The president, vice-president, and three committee-men at the December quarterly meeting, and four committee-men at each quarterly meeting held in March, June, and September. All retiring officers are immediately re-eligible.

(*c*) *Eligibility of Officers.*—No person shall be eligible for the position of president or vice-president who has not served at least twelve months on the general management committee within the last two years previous to nomination.

(*d*) *No person* shall be eligible to hold any office in the society who has not been nominated for the particular office in writing (on forms provided for the purpose), signed by the proposer and seconder, and sent to the secretary not later than six p.m. on the fourth Tuesday previous to the day of election. The secretary will then notify parties of their nomination, asking for their reply within seven days of date of nomination, stating whether they accept nomination or not. The names of those accepting nomination will be printed on balance sheet. A list of all nominations shall be posted in every place of business of the society, not later than the second Monday before the day of election.

(*e*) *A retiring president, vice-president, or committee-man* may be nominated for the position of president or vice-president, or as a member of the committee, at the same election.

(*f*) *All candidates* to be eligible for election must be qualified as follows:—

(1) £1 share fully paid up.

(2) Must have been a member one year.

(3) No person shall be qualified to act as president, vice-president, or as a member of the committee who has any relative of any one of the following degrees in the society's employ, viz., son or grandson, daughter or granddaughter, father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt, nephew, niece, or cousin, or any one of the above-named degrees with the word "step" prefixed, or the words "in-law" added to, in order to describe the relationship more correctly. Members at present serving on the committee who are affected by this qualification to retire as their term of office expires.



T. H. SMITH, F.C.I.S.,
Secretary Bristol Co-operative Society.



G. GAIT,

Assistant Secretary Bristol Co-operative Society.

(4) No committee-man shall be appointed to a situation in the society who has not retired from the committee at least six months prior to such engagement.

(*g*) *Election of Officers.*—The principle of district voting shall be adopted; the arrangements for conducting same to be left in the hands of general committee.

(*h*) *No member* or members shall issue or cause to be issued any literature or appeals for support, either by circular or advertisement, in favour of any person or persons seeking to be elected to any office in connection with the society. Any person or persons who may be elected, in whose favour this rule has been infringed, and who can be proved to be in collusion with same, shall be disqualified and shall vacate his office.

(*i*) *If any member* of the committee absent himself for four consecutive weeks without a reason satisfactory to the committee, they shall declare the position vacant, and proceed to elect the member who received the highest number of votes of the unsuccessful candidates at the previous members' meeting.

(*j*) *The committee* shall not make any addition to fixed stock or real estate, incurring an outlay of the funds of the society exceeding the sum of £3,000 on any one transaction, nor shall they sell any land belonging to the society, without first obtaining the sanction of a general meeting.

(*k*) *The secretary and assistant-secretary* shall be appointed and removed by the committee, who shall also fix their duties and remuneration.

XIII.—*The accounts* of the society shall be audited by two auditors, who shall be members of either the Institute of Chartered Accountants or the Incorporated Society of Accountants and Auditors, or by a public auditor, who shall be elected annually at the general meeting held in December.

XIV.—

(*a*) *Not less* than 2½ per cent of net profits shall be placed to the credit of the reserve fund quarterly.

(*b*) *The employés* of the society shall receive as bonus not less than 5 per cent of the net profits, or such other sum as the committee may direct, subject to conditions of employment, and the approval of any ordinary business meeting.

From the first there was considerable difference of opinion as to the appropriateness of the name adopted.

By a large and influential body of members it was felt that the title was too limited, and, moreover, did not meet the altered position so well as that of Bristol and District or the City of Bristol. On the other hand, it was claimed that for the smooth working of amalgamation it had been conceded that both of the old Societies must lose their special identity, and to adopt the name of either would be to break the spirit of that understanding.

Another of the special rules which came in for a prolonged discussion was that dealing with the provision of bonus to employés. True, it was passed at the meeting, but at least one of the opposition felt that sufficient intelligence had not been brought to bear upon the matter, and accordingly gave notice that he should see that the question was reopened at a later date. It was claimed that if fair wages were paid, then it was not just to the members that the profits should be depleted to find a bonus for the workers. It was contended that this system of bonuses gave preferential treatment to a minority, and thus was inconsistent with the spirit of Co-operation, which aimed at the greatest good to the greatest number. On the other hand, it was pointed out that, notwithstanding minimum wages scales, it was by no means certain that what was "fair" in respect to wages could be determined with certainty. The controversy dragged its weary length along many quarters, but was finally laid to rest in September, 1906, when the members rejected a motion brought forward by Mr. J. Ewing to rescind the rules governing the allocation of bonuses.

Those who have waded through the previous pages cannot but perceive, from a perusal of these rules, that the experience gained in the old Societies was of great value in framing a constitution for the new one.

But even with the framing of the constitution amalgamation had not been completed. The spirit of Co-operation was being hampered by the tendency towards sectional differences, mainly geographical. The coalition Committee was not working smoothly, and

there were evidences that, instead of considering the interests of the Society as a whole, the practical outcome of sectional differences might mean lopsided administration, favouring that locality which for the time being had a majority in the Committee-room. The good sense of the leaders revolted against any such thing happening, but they could do little to stay the wrangling which occasionally marred their deliberations upon the Society's affairs. Gradually it came to be admitted that the Committee was too large for really efficient administration, and this soon became whispered among the members, so that on the balance sheet for quarter ending April 23rd, 1907, a proposal to amend the rules in respect to the constitution of the Committee came as a relief to many. Time would not permit of the discussion taking place at the Quarterly Meeting in June, but in September the meeting was made special and the motion duly proposed: "That the members of the Committee should be reduced from fifteen to ten."

At the confirmation of the special rules in 1905 an amendment had been moved to bring the number of Committee down to twelve, but it was rejected, and the proposal now to reduce to ten was too sweeping for the staid methods of procedure adopted by Co-operators. A mean between the two, viz., eleven, was decided upon by a large majority.

From that time comparative harmony has prevailed; the fears expressed by those who opposed amalgamation have been seen to be groundless. Elections of Committeemen have been made irrespective of district, but the greatest proof that the members as a whole could be trusted to set aside sectional interests was established when Mr. J. Marks (late President of Bedminster) was returned to the top of the poll in December, 1906, the members' choice as President of Bristol Society. It is perhaps fair to add that but for a period of ill-health Mr. Carter might have retained the position, but the selection made undoubtedly showed that the members were solid enough in their adherence to amalgamation.

The mistake the pessimists made, and it is a very common error, was that of estimating the future according to the limitations of the present. They made no allowance for an alteration in the point of view. When the Bedminster and Bristol and District Societies ceased to be, the average members quite naturally found their allegiance transferred to the new creation. They were, in fact, Co-operators before being parishioners, and the amalgamation not only enlarged their opportunities, but also their outlook.





CENTRAL PREMISES, LAWRENCE HILL.



EAST STREET BRANCH, BEDMINSTER.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WITH the exception of that recorded in the previous chapter, the time has been all too short to estimate the effect of other policies which have been inaugurated since amalgamation took effect. This chapter, therefore, must be confined chiefly to a catalogue of such events as might be reasonably expected in the future to have a permanent influence for good or ill upon the development of Co-operation in Bristol.

At the first Quarterly Meeting, held on December 9th, 1905, a sum of £25 was voted to Mr. H. A. Carter for his services to the movement. It is scarcely necessary to say this was well-deserved recognition. One of the pioneers of the Bristol and District Society, Mr. Carter had worked through good report and ill for the advancement of Co-operation in Bristol; and, in making this presentation, the members showed the brotherly tendency of Co-operation no less than they paid tribute to the downright sincerity of the man.

At the same meeting a very definite step was taken towards systematic contributions to charities, the Committee recommending in their report annual donations to the local hospitals and dispensary. The amounts then suggested have since been increased, and doubtless, as the Society progresses, will continue to do so.

For the first two years after amalgamation the Society did not progress quite so satisfactorily as might have been expected, but since then there has been a spurt, and one can venture to predict a considerable awakening during the next ten years.

Without doubt, the methods adopted to advertise the Society more extensively have had much to do with the

increased trade and membership for the past three or four years. Time was when the movement was content to sing its praises to itself, relying upon the inherent goodness of the cause to attract the passer-by. Stores in back streets, no attempt at display of goods, and extreme timidity in offering Co-operatively-made goods—these were characteristic, not only of Bristol, but most other Co-operators a few years back. But the scene is rapidly changing. Co-operators are leading where they used to follow. Instead of whispering to one another as to what might be done if people would co-operate, they now take their stand in the world's markets, offering their wares with confidence, and proclaiming far and wide the merits of Co-operative, as opposed to competitive, trading. They realise that theirs is a new evangel which needs to be preached constantly, and they also realise that they have to demonstrate the worth of this evangel in practice. Success for the Co-operative movement depends upon the ability of Co-operators to gain the ear of the community, and enthuse the people with the gospel of brotherhood in trading. It also depends upon their ability to persuade the community that no other system of trading can serve it so well. For this, publicity is essential.

It has been one of the features of Co-operative Congresses that an Exhibition of Co-operative Productions has been held. For years this was the only organised attempt to advertise upon practical lines, but of late the C.W.S. in particular has organised similar undertakings where Societies were sufficiently enthusiastic to promote them. It will be remembered that the opening of Church Road premises by Bedminster was signalised in this manner. Efforts were made to induce Bristol and District officials to embark upon a similar policy, but without success. Upon amalgamation, the question of a large Co-operative Exhibition in Bristol was again brought forward, and at one time seemed likely to be taken up. But the question of cost killed it. To spend £200 upon a large central exhibition did not seem to be a profitable undertaking, and for a time the matter was dropped. When, however, at the end of 1907, trade

and prospects generally seemed to be languishing, the discussion was renewed, and it was decided to hold not one, but several exhibitions—wherever, in fact, the Society had accommodation on its own premises an Exhibition of Co-operative Productions was to be set up, members and friends invited to attend, and addresses of a propagandist nature delivered. The help of the C.W.S. was obtained, and some excellent displays were made at Cotham, St. George's Road, Bishopston, Lawrence Hill, Greenbank, and Fishponds. The displays were kept open for a week at each place, and, during the period, members had the opportunity of buying sample parcels of Co-operative productions at reduced prices. The success which followed these tactics is seen in the increased loyalty, as well as in the increased number of members. These exhibitions proved to be a valuable and effective advertisement for the Society—they were good business.

The success attending these efforts stimulated the enthusiasts to formulate other schemes. The General Committee invited suggestions, and, taking their cue from the Edmonton Society, the St. George's Road Council suggested a new members' week: that for a full week all members joining during the period should have the value of their entrance fee returned in goods of Co-operative production.

A conference was called, to which were invited District Councils, Women's Guild Branches, and all employés over sixteen years of age. The scheme was discussed and accepted upon a resolution moved and seconded by employés. It was put into operation in September, 1909, and was an unqualified success, resulting in an addition of 644 to the membership roll. A month later the Chairman was able to announce that sales were booming, increasing at an average rate of £500 per week.

During the whole period since amalgamation the Building Department has been kept going at full pressure. On October 21st, 1905, the Fishponds Store, which had

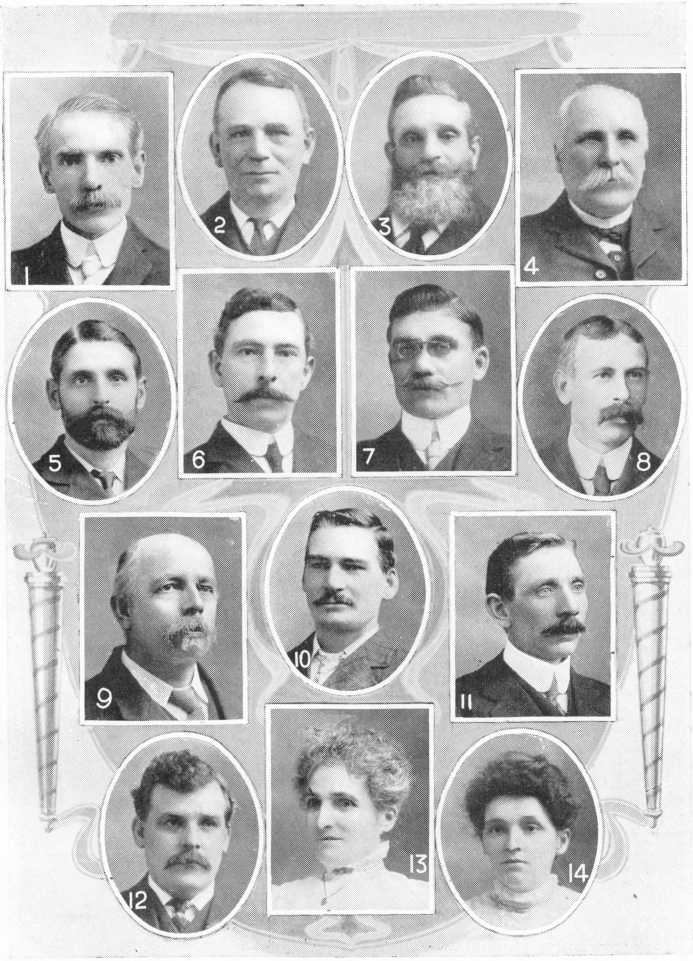
been in hand since the closing period of the Bristol and District Society's existence, was handed over to the Society, and declared open for business by Mr. H. A. Carter (President), a large number of members and friends being present. This, one of the most substantial of the Society's Branches, is well equipped for the grocery and provision, drapery, and boot trades, and over the two commodious shops devoted to trade purposes is a large hall, suitable for public meetings.

The plans which the old Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society had prepared in respect to the Shirehampton premises were already in hand at the date of amalgamation, but upon consideration it was felt that they were not suitable for the purposes of the new Society. New plans were, therefore, prepared and adopted. These dispensed with the dwelling accommodation, which was a feature in the old plans, and provided for a large shop, suitable for a general country trade, with ample warehouse room, and a hall overhead capable of seating 200 persons. The opening of these premises took place on March 15th, 1907, a Tea, Concert, and Public Meeting being held to celebrate the event.

The contract to build upon the land bought by the late Society at Avonmouth was, after some negotiation with the ground landlord, extended in point of time, the Society not feeling justified in the present undeveloped state of the district in spending the large sum required to build thereon. Meanwhile, a shop was leased for five years from June, 1907, hard by the premises which had been used by the old Society, and for the time being the question of building at Avonmouth has been postponed.

Towards the end of 1907 the Committee began to concern themselves about the provision of more suitable premises at Whitehall. It will be remembered that land had already been secured by the Bristol and District Society. This fronted the main thoroughfare, and upon this land was erected a commodious Store, which was opened for business in the summer of 1908.

MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE, BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1909–10.



1. H. A. Carter.
2. A. T. Bennett.
3. D. Davies.
4. J. Ewing.
5. W. B. Griffin.
6. J. Marks, *President.*
7. W. J. Petherick, *Vice-President.*
8. A. E. Hampton.
9. H. Maddrick.
10. W. H. Merrick.
11. W. Hillman.
12. F. Mills.
13. Mrs. Fidkin.
14. Mrs. M. Found.

But the main activities of the Building Department have been concentrated upon increased bakery accommodation. The land at Whitehall bought by the late Bristol and District Society for the erection of stables was seen to be sufficient to permit of wider use; and after some investigation and controversy it was decided in December, 1908, to proceed with the development of this land in the direction of both bakery and stables, details of which will be found in that chapter dealing with the Bakery Department.

From its commencement, Bishopston Branch has been one of the most, if not the most, thriving of all Branches. Notwithstanding that one after another of its outposts have been surrendered to other new Branches, it has still maintained its lead in trade. For some considerable time prior to amalgamation it had been serving the district of Westbury, but with the rapid growth of population on the newly-developed Coldharbour Estate it soon became evident that the Society must have its own stock of goods on the spot. Accordingly, premises were found at North View, Westbury Park, and on November 28th, 1908, No. 24 Branch was opened for the convenience of that neighbourhood.

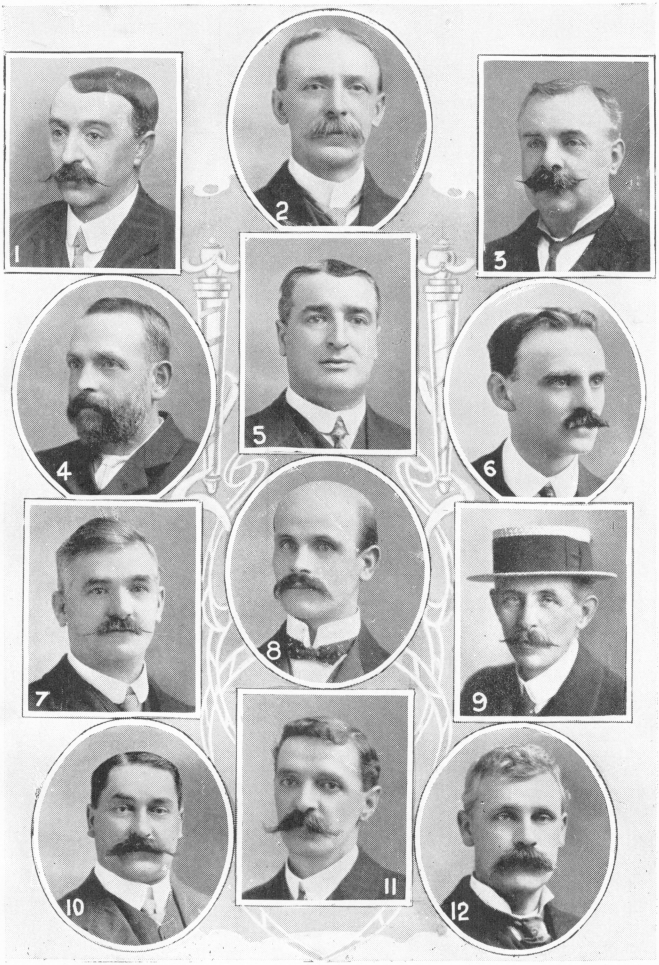
Amongst important developments in trade matters the resolution to limit the sale of soap to that produced by the C.W.S. must not be overlooked. This was decided upon at a Monthly Meeting of members in November, 1906, during the extraordinary outcry which resulted from the action of certain soap manufacturers in trying to establish a combine. Of course, Co-operatively, it is all to the good that this resolve was taken, but it is a little strange that Co-operators should need to have such actions literally forced upon their understanding. It is becoming more and more evident that the wily advertiser is using not only Co-operative Societies but the retail trade generally as counters in the great game of profit-making. The retailer no longer buys, he orders, and the direction his orders take is dictated not so much by his judgment as to qualities and prices as by the demand

which is created by the puff of astute capitalists. Co-operators have to some extent been caught by these wiles, or their shops would not be emporiums for goods which compete with those of their own manufacture. This resolution about soap selling was a step in the right direction, and it may reasonably be expected that it will be followed by others.

The question of altering their check system has often been debated by Bristol Co-operators. The method at present adopted, that of tin tokens being handed to the customer, which tokens bear a corresponding value to the amount expended, has the merit of simplicity, but leaves many loopholes for undesirable practices, such as holding back from one quarter to another, or the selling of checks by non-members to members. Further, unless carefully watched, the system lends itself to irregularities that are not easy to locate in the internal workings of the Store. During the greater part of 1907 the Committee were engaged in investigating the various systems existing in the movement, and in September of that year presented their report, to the effect that " the General Committee had carefully looked into the matter, and had considered the various schemes before them. They decided not to recommend any change in the present system, except that a special check upon the metal checks issued should be made, and that they be treated in the same way as the cash transactions. It had been found upon investigation that for the past five years the value of checks given in by the members had been less by £3,000 than the sales." This was considered to be evidence that no abuse of the present system had taken place.

In addition to the question of check system, two others were discussed with some advantage during 1902 and 1907. First it was found that considerable saving might be effected by having half-yearly instead of quarterly stocktakings, and accordingly it was decided in June, 1907, that this procedure should be adopted; and, following upon the lines of the C.W.S., an interim quarterly report issued, and a dividend paid equivalent

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1909–10.



1. S. Whitehead, Grocery Manager.
2. C. Pinkerton, Cashier.
3. A. D. Park, Assistant Grocery Manager.
4. J. Crew, Bakery Department.
5. H. J. Clapp, Bakery Delivery Department.
6. C. Emery, Drapery Manager.
7. S. Lacy, Boot Manager.
8. T. Balkwill, Clothing Manager.
9. A. E. Cockbain, Coal Department and Furniture Remover.
10. W. J. Stearman, Stables.
11. A. E. Honeywill, Stables.
12. W. Ashley, Building Department.

to that declared for the previous balance sheet, the necessary adjustment to be made in the next half-yearly issue.

Another, and perhaps a more important matter, was that of altering the rules, in order to limit the rate of interest upon capital according to the spendings of the investor. An attempt had been made to introduce this principle in the framing of the special rules, but unsuccessfully. But, as the Society progressed, it was freely commented upon that an increasing number of shareholders were using the Society as a means of safe investment, in consequence of which, others, loyal to the Store as purchasers, were having to provide the necessary funds to enable these partners to accumulate riches while they slept. The first definite step to restrict this state of things was taken in December, 1907, when the General Committee were instructed to make a thorough investigation and report, with recommendations to the Quarterly Meeting.

The result of this inquiry led to an alteration of the rule governing the allocation of interest upon capital, which altered rule, reading as follows, came into operation on January 20th, 1909 :—

> To secure 5 per cent interest on share capital from £1 to £50 the quarterly purchases shall average £2, and from £51 to £100 the average must be £4 quarterly. On purchases below this average only 2½ per cent will be given. Such average will be computed upon three quarters' purchases, and will also carry interest on loan capital at the rate of 4 per cent and 2½ per cent, to be based on precisely the same quarterly average purchases as refers to share capital.

Futile attempts have been made to deal with the question of entrance fees, first by a motion in June, 1906, to reduce from 1s. to 6d., and later, in December, 1907, to abolish it altogether. These were efforts put forward on behalf of the poorer brethren, but they were not successful.

The pressure of depreciation upon fixed stock was becoming very heavy in 1908–9, and, with the consent of the Auditors, the Committee in September, 1909, proposed

that the special rule governing the rate of depreciation be altered to permit of 7½ per cent being substituted for 10 per cent.

Two matters of internal administration, which occurred since amalgamation, call for some notice here, although one of them is dealt with under a special heading elsewhere. This, the education controversy, was one which caused a certain amount of bitterness at the time, and perhaps by reason of this delayed many necessary reforms in that department. As soon as amalgamation was completed a Special Committee was appointed to recommend the manner of adjusting the airy ideals which pervaded the atmosphere in which this work was being carried on. Unfortunately, the Committee split into two parties, and each advocated its policy with vigour. Misunderstandings there were, undoubtedly, on both sides, and the result of the controversy, instead of adjusting differences and reorganising the existing systems, superimposed upon the whole Society, with a few small alterations, that system which had evolved in somewhat crude fashion—though admittedly in some respects with good results—in the life's history of one Society alone. The controversy and its result were, without doubt, due to the difficulty which is constantly arising among Co-operators to distinguish between the methods necessary for propagating Co-operative business and those necessary for creating Co-operative character—the former extensive, the latter intensive; the former from the circumference outward, the latter from the circumference inward.

The other matters, also of a controversial nature, had to do with certain charges which were brought against the Manager of the Bakery Department. Towards the close of 1906, owing to certain ugly rumours concerning the buying of yeast, a Sub-Committee was appointed by the General Committee from among themselves to investigate the methods adopted to obtain supplies of this and other commodities required by the department, the result of which seemed to point to irregularities which

were prejudicial to the Society's best interests, and they recommended that the Manager should be asked to resign. The General Committee were not unanimously with their Sub-Committee, although their recommendation was endorsed. Upon the matter being brought to the members, considerable difference of opinion was manifest as to the gravity of the situation, and a Special Committee of Investigation was appointed from the body of the meeting to examine the evidence and report. The result was made known at the Quarterly Meeting in March, 1907, when the Manager was exonerated upon all counts of the indictment. Amid great enthusiasm he was reinstated. At the following Quarterly Meeting in June certain of the Committee tendered their resignations, which, however, were not accepted. An apology was afterwards sought for and obtained by the Bakery Manager from the individual who first started the rumour, and thus ended a painful episode.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

PRESIDENTS.

Mr. H. A. CARTER	1¼ years	1905 to 1906.
,, J. MARKS	3 ,,	1906 to 1909.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

Mr. J. MARKS	1¼ years	1905 to 1906.
,, C. CONNOLLY.....	1 ,,	1907.
,, W. J. PETHERICK	2 ,,	1908 to 1909.

SECRETARY.

Mr. T. H. SMITH	4¼ years	1905 to 1909.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

Mr. G. GAIT	4¼ years	1905 to 1909.

COMMITTEE-MEN.

Mr. D. Davies	4¼	years	1905 to 1909.
,, J. Ewing	4¼	,,	1905 to 1909.
Mrs. Fidkin	4¼	,,	1905 to 1909.
Mrs. Found	4¼	,,	1905 to 1909.
Mr. Griffin	3½	,,	1905 to 1906, 1907 to 1909.
,, Connolly	3¼	,,	1905 to 1906, 1908 to 1909.
,, H. A. Carter	3	,,	1907 to 1909.
,, Hampton	3	,,	1905 to 1907, 1909.
,, Bennett	2½	,,	1907 to 1909.
,, Petherick	2¼	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Knight	2	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, T. Phillips	2	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Tenney	2	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Maddrick	2	,,	1907 to 1909.
,, Marsh	1¾	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Mills	1¾	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Treble	1¾	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Cleal	1¾	,,	1907 to 1909.
,, Day	1¾	,,	1907 to 1909.
,, Curle	1½	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Hillman	1½	,,	1905 to 1907.
,, Merrick	1½	,,	1908 to 1909.
,, W. Pope	1¼	,,	1907 to 1908.
,, Conybeare	1¼	,,	1906 to 1907.
,, Short	1¼	,,	1906 to 1907.
,, Barber	1¼	,,	1907 to 1908.
,, Chaddock	1¼	,,	1907 to 1908.
,, Walker	1¼	,,	1907 to 1908.
,, A. Bullock	1	,,	1905 to 1906.

Less than one year:—

Mr. Dufty.
,, Tanner.
Mr. S. C. Pope.
Mrs. Sheppard.

KINGSLAND ROAD BRANCH.

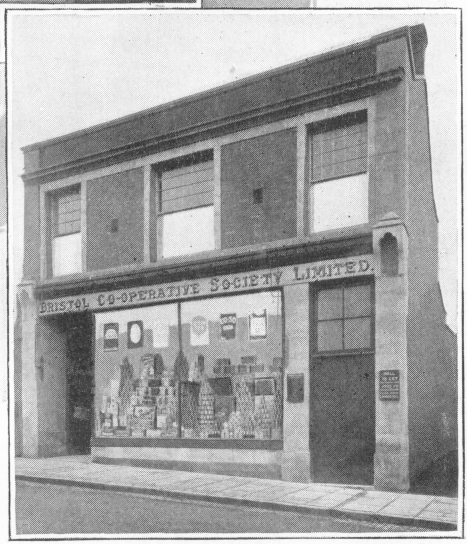




KEYNSHAM BRANCH.

CLOUDS HILL BRANCH.





WHITEHALL BRANCH.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS.

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profit.
Ashley Road Branch—	£	£	£
October 24th, 1905	1983	204	126
January 23rd, 1906	2166	220	174
April 24th, 1906	2044	219	153
July 24th, 1906	1873	214	111
October 23rd, 1906	1818	212	152
January 22nd, 1907	1975	220	176
April 23rd, 1907	1924	229	152
July 23rd, 1907	1903	232	129
October 22nd, 1907	1857	228	125
January 21st, 1908	2043	236	153
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	3881	466	259
January 19th, 1909	3791	485	211
July 20th, 1909	3871	479	233
January 18th, 1910	4151	482	270
Avonmouth Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	1039	177	22
January 23rd, 1906	1165	193	41
April 24th, 1906	1178	195	24
July 24th, 1906	1024	167	12
October 23rd, 1906	1038	164	10
January 22nd, 1907	1155	184	60
April 23rd, 1907	1161	190	44
July 23rd, 1907	1092	185	25
October 22nd, 1907	1121	191	10
January 21st, 1908	1335	207	57
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2388	404	44
January 19th, 1909	2074	324	66
July 20th, 1909	1892	263	88
January 18th, 1910	2298	272	127
Barrow Road Branch (Greengrocery)—			
October 25th, 1905	Trading not commenced.		
January 23rd, 1906	S. 93 / T. 806	57	25
April 24th, 1906	S. 94 / T. 557	50	10
July 24th, 1906	S. 127 / T. 478	45	11

S. Sales. T. Transfers.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Barrow Road Branch (Greengrocery) *continued*—	£	£	£
October 23rd, 1906	S. 132 / T. 575	41	25
January 22nd, 1907	S. 151 / T. 465	45	33
April 23rd, 1907	S. 168 / T. 470	17	*16
July 23rd, 1907	S. 210 / T. 790	20	19
October 22nd, 1907	S. 203 / T. 754	20	38
January 21st, 1908	S. 243 / T. 841	20	51
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	S. 457 / T. 1193	39	3
January 19th, 1909	S. 447 / T. 1182	39	44
July 20th, 1909	S. 620 / T. 1405	39	56
January 18th, 1910	S. 606 / T. 1434	39	138
Bishopston Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	3186	296	318
January 23rd, 1906	3612	345	333
April 24th, 1906	3419	344	307
July 24th, 1906	3253	339	258
October 23rd, 1906	3096	330	250
January 22nd, 1907	3394	335	330
April 23rd, 1907	3277	347	318
July 23rd, 1907	3181	356	245
October 22nd, 1907	3185	355	252
January 21st, 1908	3589	364	342
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	6740	738	520
January 19th, 1909	6628	734	521
July 20th, 1909	6029	671	473
January 18th, 1910	6040	657	446
Chessels Street Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	1132	100	92
January 23rd, 1906	1190	118	80

S. Sales. T. Transfers. * Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Chessels Street Branch (*continued* —	£	£	£
April 24th, 1906	1135	118	54
July 24th, 1906	1118	113	83
October 23rd, 1906	1120	117	89
January 22nd, 1907	1188	119	103
April 23rd, 1907	1225	128	120
July 23rd, 1907	1204	137	75
October 22nd, 1907	1253	139	76
January 21st, 1908	1326	143	115
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2620	302	156
January 19th, 1909	2709	315	140
July 20th, 1909	2861	326	189
January 18th, 1910	3064	323	178
Clouds Hill Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	715	94	27
January 23rd, 1906	774	98	49
April 24th, 1906	762	99	36
July 24th, 1906	739	95	39
October 23rd, 1906	718	93	35
January 22nd, 1907	798	94	54
April 23rd, 1907	803	96	49
July 23rd, 1907	784	99	51
October 22nd, 1907	786	99	42
January 21st, 1908	838	102	48
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	1623	197	77
January 19th, 1909	1636	206	53
July 20th, 1909	1627	207	59
January 18th, 1910	1862	220	81
Cotham Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	2537	299	144
January 23rd, 1906	2858	304	200
April 24th, 1906	2687	300	137
July 24th, 1906	2460	290	129
October 23rd, 1906	2321	274	89
January 22nd, 1907	2472	296	207
April 23rd, 1907	2453	311	171
July 23rd, 1907	2356	317	111
October 22nd, 1907	2296	316	100
January 21st, 1908	2600	326	163
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Cotham Branch (*continued*)—	£	£	£
July 21st, 1908	5029	670	219
January 19th, 1909	4906	684	216
July 20th, 1909	4676	671	161
January 18th, 1910	4901	646	171
Downend Road Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	755	83	64
January 23rd, 1906	908	94	71
April 24th, 1906	961	98	90
July 24th, 1906	966	100	81
October 23rd, 1906	967	100	91
January 22nd, 1907	1061	107	102
April 23rd, 1907	1001	112	84
July 23rd, 1907	967	112	89
October 22nd, 1907	982	116	52
January 21st, 1908	1090	121	95
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2148	245	140
January 19th, 1909	2204	262	135
July 20th, 1909	2096	255	80
January 18th, 1910	2210	240	132
East Street (Bedminster) Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	1972	236	74
January 23rd, 1906	2025	222	78
April 24th, 1906	1929	216	151
July 24th, 1906	1781	207	113
October 23rd, 1906	1686	202	107
January 22nd, 1907	1906	208	145
April 23rd, 1907	1843	219	104
July 23rd, 1907	1838	224	82
October 22nd, 1907	1902	226	115
January 21st, 1908	2144	236	148
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	4082	472	269
January 19th, 1909	4255	497	251
July 20th, 1909	4301	496	263
January 18th, 1910	4660	509	287
Fishponds Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	Trading not commenced.		
January 23rd, 1906	818	128	19

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Fishponds Branch *(continued)*—	£	£	£
April 24th, 1906	793	119	19
July 24th, 1906	807	116	44
October 23rd, 1906	830	119	41
January 22nd, 1907	1018	130	78
April 23rd, 1907	1069	143	75
July 23rd, 1907	1039	152	48
October 22nd, 1907	1053	152	30
January 21st, 1908	1191	152	80
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2368	324	100
January 19th, 1909	2464	343	90
July 20th, 1909	2500	337	86
January 18th, 1910	2901	354	186
Greenbank Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	2318	213	188
January 23rd, 1906	2196	212	161
April 24th, 1906	2036	204	134
July 24th, 1906	1933	200	138
October 23rd, 1906	1836	199	108
January 22nd, 1907	1977	195	133
April 23rd, 1907	1971	207	129
July 23rd, 1907	1929	215	122
October 22nd, 1907	1936	214	108
January 21st, 1908	2100	218	136
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	4072	423	259
January 19th, 1909	4322	460	244
July 20th, 1909	4320	466	236
January 18th, 1910	4676	483	284
Keynsham Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	295	43	10
January 23rd, 1906	280	45	*2
April 24th, 1906	296	45	...
July 24th, 1906	267	42	...
October 23rd, 1906	246	38	*23
January 22nd, 1907	259	41	*4
April 23rd, 1907	295	43	12
July 23rd, 1907	288	41	2
October 22nd, 1907	296	45	2
January 21st, 1908	286	50	*10
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			

*Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profit.
Keynsham Branch (*continued*) –	£	£	£
July 21st, 1908	694	95	20
January 19th, 1909	768	101	14
July 20th, 1909	827	116	11
January 18th, 1910	871	122	*8
Kingsland Road Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	837	74	80
January 23rd, 1906	903	94	56
April 24th, 1906	893	99	52
July 24th, 1906	833	93	37
October 23rd, 1906	796	89	58
January 22nd, 1907	860	92	51
April 23rd, 1907	902	97	65
July 23rd, 1907	871	99	47
October 22nd, 1907	867	97	43
January 21st, 1908	954	102	63
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	1845	212	78
January 19th, 1909	1875	221	78
July 20th, 1909	1908	228	62
January 18th, 1910	2109	233	62
Kingswood Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	796	105	37
January 23rd, 1906	844	108	44
April 24th, 1906	870	104	54
July 24th, 1906	870	104	53
October 23rd, 1906	879	108	71
January 22nd, 1907	949	112	82
April 28th, 1907	1001	112	84
July 23rd, 1907	957	124	61
October 22nd, 1907	977	127	49
January 21st, 1908	1083	132	69
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2133	266	100
January 19th, 1909	2333	315	72
July 30th, 1909	2263	290	95
January 18th, 1910	2478	301	108
Lawrence Hill Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	3288	327	243
January 23rd, 1906	3575	378	230

* Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profit.
Lawrence Hill Branch (*continued*) –	£	£	£
April 24th, 1906	3426	372	201
July 24th, 1906	3235	361	202
October 23rd, 1906	3127	359	290
January 22nd, 1907	3355	351	303
April 23rd, 1907	3398	321	298
July 27th, 1907	3383	325	200
October 22nd, 1907	3388	337	254
January 21st, 1908	3637	338	250
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	7045	685	521
January 19th, 1909	7036	680	504
July 20th, 1909	6906	652	526
January 18th, 1910	7230	689	593
Newfoundland Road Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	1519	161	104
January 23rd, 1906	1662	173	133
April 24th, 1906	1559	164	134
July 24th, 1906	1458	156	107
October 23rd, 1906	1407	156	103
January 22nd, 1907	1590	162	129
April 23rd, 1907	1560	161	138
July 23rd, 1907	1480	162	117
October 22nd, 1907	1455	165	95
January 21st, 1908	1593	162	153
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	3009	317	232
January 19th, 1909	3041	330	214
July 20th, 1909	2984	322	206
January 18th, 1910	3126	330	213
Raleigh Road Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	1255	149	86
January 23rd, 1906	1421	165	94
April 24th, 1906	1310	163	80
July 24th, 1906	1221	156	75
October 23rd, 1906	1137	150	55
January 22nd, 1907	1253	160	79
April 23rd, 1907	1242	173	46
July 23rd, 1907	1214	174	34
October 22nd, 1907	1256	173	30
January 21st, 1908	1441	186	87
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Qnarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Raleigh Road Branch *(continued)*—	£	£	£
July 21st, 1908	2763	375	97
January 19th, 1909	2949	386	108
July 20th, 1909	2963	377	102
January 18th, 1910	3226	383	137
Raymend Road Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	859	84	52
January 23rd, 1906	935	92	51
April 24th, 1906	940	94	68
July 24th, 1906	922	93	71
October 23rd, 1906	932	94	74
January 22nd, 1907	1030	99	87
April 23rd, 1907	1059	105	80
July 23rd, 1907	1019	106	61
October 22nd, 1907	955	105	58
January 21st, 1908	1049	108	81
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2043	220	124
January 19th, 1909	2126	232	97
July 20th, 1909	2159	234	120
January 18th, 1910	2317	246	144
Redfield Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	2546	238	182
January 23rd, 1906	2700	255	193
April 24th, 1906	2642	255	200
July 24th, 1906	2504	257	193
October 23rd, 1906	2435	253	165
January 22nd, 1907	2541	252	216
April 23rd, 1907	2525	262	183
July 23rd, 1907	2416	270	170
October 22nd, 1907	2452	269	192
January 21st, 1908	2523	266	212
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	5052	549	341
January 19th, 1909	5085	566	312
July 20th, 1909	4918	545	284
January 18th, 1910	5176	550	307
St. George's Road Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	1728	191	128
January 23rd, 1906	1910	208	154
April 24th, 1906	1821	200	136

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
	£	£	£
St. George's Road Branch (*continued*) -			
July 24th, 1906	1723	199	119
October 23rd, 1906	1671	194	119
January 22nd, 1907	1880	201	154
April 23rd, 1907	1860	209	141
July 23rd, 1907	1727	215	103
October 22nd, 1907	1662	211	76
January 21st, 1908	1863	219	124
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	3593	435	215
January 19th, 1909	3543	447	172
July 20th, 1909	3560	454	145
January 18th, 1910	3842	465	184
Sandy Park Road (Brislington) Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	1122	106	104
January 23rd, 1906	1176	111	89
April 24th, 1906	1151	111	88
July 24th, 1906	1128	115	75
October 23rd, 1906	1083	116	69
January 22nd, 1907	1158	121	67
April 23rd, 1907	1183	125	96
July 23rd, 1907	1250	135	86
October 22nd, 1907	1268	137	85
January 21st, 1908	1408	141	100
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2714	284	193
January 19th, 1909	2862	307	184
July 20th, 1909	3021	315	207
January 18th, 1910	3445	339	229
Shirehampton Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	481	59	20
January 23rd, 1906	503	62	22
April 24th, 1906	599	77	11
July 24th, 1906	666	79	44
October 23rd, 1906	615	81	18
January 22nd, 1907	663	82	36
April 23rd, 1907	725	99	33
July 23rd, 1907	725	101	21
October 22nd, 1907	724	104	4
January 21st, 1908	776	105	30
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Shirehampton Branch (*continued*)—	£	£	£
July 21st, 1908	1602	227	43
January 19th, 1909	1610	234	39
July 20th, 1909	1680	244	35
January 18th, 1910	1984	260	77
Staple Hill Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	1147	137	68
January 23rd, 1906	1010	132	53
April 24th, 1906	998	137	39
July 24th, 1906	1018	138	46
October 23rd, 1906	1017	139	42
January 22nd, 1907	1133	143	65
April 23rd, 1907	1116	149	55
July 23rd, 1907	1111	152	59
October 22nd, 1907	1109	153	46
January 21st, 1908	1209	157	67
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2332	316	102
January 19th, 1909	2408	329	72
July 20th, 1909	2374	332	68
January 18th, 1910	2412	337	79
Wells Rd. (Totterdown) Branch—			
October 25th, 1905	2370	242	212
January 23rd, 1906	2459	256	155
April 24th, 1906	2386	262	161
July 24th, 1906	2263	257	92
October 23rd, 1906	2208	254	107
January 22nd, 1907	2392	250	157
April 23rd, 1907	2390	258	158
July 23rd, 1907	2355	266	97
October 22nd, 1907	2322	264	141
January 21st, 1908	2524	272	151
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	4754	552	232
January 19th, 1909	4726	567	171
July 20th, 1909	4752	575	159
January 18th, 1910	5151	582	293
Whitehall Branch—			
October 24th, 1905	661	74	20
January 23rd, 1906	701	78	65
April 24th, 1906	687	74	41

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Whitehall Branch *(continued)*—	£	£	£
July 24th, 1906	690	76	44
October 23rd, 1906	724	76	55
January 22nd, 1907	801	78	69
April 23rd, 1907	796	81	77
July 23rd, 1907	740	82	44
October 22nd, 1907	717	83	43
January 21st, 1908	764	84	63
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	1619	177	104
January 19th, 1909	1811	245	37
July 20th, 1909	1855	250	61
January 18th, 1910	2084	265	72
Bakery Department—			
October 25th, 1905	12347	1584	2161
January 23rd, 1906	12007	1710	1461
April 24th, 1906	12415	1686	1844
July 24th, 1906	11922	1664	1881
October 23rd, 1906	11429	1633	1882
January 22nd, 1907	12026	1668	2280
April 23rd, 1907	12422	1873	2259
July 23rd, 1907	12464	1913	2120
October 22nd, 1907	13544	1852	2102
January 21st, 1908	14952	1959	1966
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	30523	3881	5280
January 19th, 1909	29987	3954	4877
July 20th, 1909	32733	4096	4569
January 18th, 1910	34174	4119	5495
Boot Department (including Repairs)—			
October 25th, 1905	777	104	*9
January 23rd, 1906	751	110	115
April 24th, 1906	728	109	33
July 24th, 1906	754	108	28
October 23rd, 1906	718	114	57
January 22nd, 1907	721	117	8
April 23rd, 1907	824	106	101
July 23rd, 1907	868	109	10
October 22nd, 1907	798	110	39
January 21st, 1908	880	114	121
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			

* Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Boot Department (including Repairs) *continued*—	£	£	£
July 21st, 1908	1678	219	67
January 19th, 1909	1589	236	45
July 20th, 1909	1770	225	162
January 18th, 1910	1823	238	*47
Clothing Department—			
October 25th, 1905	740	102	78
January 23rd, 1906	752	110	92
April 24th, 1906	767	109	87
July 24th, 1906	1016	115	175
October 23rd, 1906	566	103	5
January 22nd, 1907	832	112	107
April 23rd, 1907	968	115	144
July 23rd, 1907	1188	125	172
October 22nd, 1907	725	109	57
January 21st, 1908	986	118	100
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	2104	248	202
January 19th, 1909	1720	249	185
July 20th, 1909	2060	247	224
January 18th, 1910	1809	250	215
Coal Department—			
October 25th, 1905	1660	436	225
January 23rd, 1906	2640	658	311
April 24th, 1906	2546	618	227
July 24th, 1906	1017	380	26
October 23rd, 1906	1509	476	67
January 22nd, 1907	2797	692	297
April 23rd, 1907	3074	727	290
July 23rd, 1907	1387	426	88
October 22nd, 1907	2640	604	212
January 21st, 1908	3469	733	309
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	5391	1430	294
January 19th, 1909	6186	1591	453
July 20th, 1909	5894	1562	455
January 18th, 1910	7028	1785	425
Drapery and Furnishing Departments—			
October 25th, 1905	2239	340	164
January 23rd, 1906	2417	388	131

* Loss.

BRANCH AND DEPARTMENTAL STATISTICS—*continued.*

For Quarter Ended	Sales.	Expenses.	Profits.
Drapery and Furnishing Departments (*continued*)—	£	£	£
April 24th, 1906	2186	385	46
July 24th, 1906	2283	371	200
October 23rd, 1906	1981	367	4
January 22nd, 1907	2431	410	17
April 23rd, 1907	2554	429	183
July 23rd, 1907	2579	443	43
October 22nd, 1907	2606	438	66
January 21st, 1908	3086	493	165
(Half-yearly Balance Sheet intervenes.)			
July 21st, 1908	5390	972	362
January 19th, 1909	5565	1009	290
July 20th, 1909	5926	1067	380
January 18th, 1910	6411	1109	561

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

Quarter Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.					
		Share.	Loans, Including Bank Ov'rdraft.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Mort-gage.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Invest-ments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.	Building Loans to Mem-bers.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Oct., 1905...	11736	61484	18296	9036	2809	600	27555	51975	6522	3236	10516	737
Jan., 1906...	11737	62146	18730	7217	3165	600	25036	51803	5959	3409	9559	712
April, 1906...	11744	64332	19641	6728	3315	600	25160	52741	5459	3392	11552	710
July, 1906...	11756	64840	19823	6777	3590	600	24967	52345	5967	3419	12094	700
Oct., 1906...	11820	66163	20275	7040	3721	...	26711	51901	5472	3470	13012	690
Jan. 1907...	11939	67296	20484	6082	3941	...	27502	52080	6054	3480	12419	658
April, 1907...	12089	70389	12306	7569	4328	...	26488	52168	4927	3586	11253	640
July, 1907...	12318	73068	12662	7414	4647	...	27321	51870	5808	3494	12439	624
Oct., 1907...	12614	76368	12949	7379	4574	...	27781	51777	6081	3580	14590	609
Jan., 1908...	12964	78743	13478	8391	4282	...	29610	52117	7226	3905	15751	594
Half Year—												
July, 1908...	13391	85050	14727	8473	4804	...	27286	55173	7339	3848	24028	560
Jan., 1909...	13775	88293	15444	8827	5643	...	28925	62592	8348	4043	17773	533
July, 1909...	14456	92496	15653	9935	5487	...	31791	69260	9649	4276	12264	503
Jan., 1910...	14942	97399	16430	10380	5557	...	31256	77052	11641	4630	10972	487

Quarter Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Profit and How Disposed Of.					
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Dividend.	Bonus to Employees.	Educational Purposes.	Charity.
	£	£	£	£	£	s. d.	£	£	£ s. d.
Oct., 1905...	5979	53942	761	4710	698	1 5	214	107	33 10 0
Jan., 1906...	5937	56455	692	4101	819	1 4	199	99	2 2 0
April, 1906...	5775	55259	705	4164	835	1 4	205	103	...
July, 1906...	5561	51873	647	3984	814	1 4	199	99	...
Oct., 1906...	5483	50042	650	3985	811	1 4	184	92	33 10 0
Jan., 1907...	5622	55570	654	4558	866	1 5	228	114	...
April, 1907...	5909	56756	676	5369	966	1 6	265	133	5 0 0
July, 1907...	6104	54530	728	4363	944	1 6	204	102	...
Oct., 1907...	6015	56340	709	4184	980	1 5	207	104	35 15 0
Jan., 1908...	6150	62985	731	5112	1019	1 5	256	128	8 3 0
Half Year—									
July, 1908...	*14515	121696	1519	10730	2174	1 5	510	255	9 13 6
Jan., 1909...	*16015	122982	1645	9944	2283	1 5	468	234	43 1 0
July, 1909...	*16658	126726	1688	9950	2404	1 5	475	238	...
Jan., 1910...	*18106	135645	1589	11298	2305	1 5	565	282	47 0 0
	123,829	1,060,621	13,394	86,452	17,918	...	4,179	2,090	217 14 6

* Includes Building Department Wages—July, 1908, £2,248; January, 1909, £3,499; July, 1909, £3,679; January, 1910, £3,045.



CHAPTER XXIX.

Sundry Co-operative Failures and Successes.

CO-OPERATION has expressed itself in many forms in Bristol, but always with an ideal of mutual helpfulness.

In 1875 a Mutual Help Association was started in Phippen Street. This enterprise was of the nature of a Club, and had for its objects Co-operative distribution, as well as educational lectures and social meetings. Mr. Riley, a journalist of the social reformer type, and at a later period connected with Mr. Ruskin in his Guild of St. George experiment, came to Bristol to manage the Club and carry on the mutual help work, but a dispute arose over the extension of the Club hours for drinking purposes, and Mr. Riley seceded, and a portion of the members with him, to found a Social Improvement Institute in Brunswick Square. Co-operative distribution of goods was carried on, and the effort has been described as producing "good moral results," but the low subscriptions would not pay expenses, and the effort was continued for eighteen months only. On the Committee of this institution were the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Hargreaves, Miss Estlin, Miss Mary Priestman, and Mr. Sharland.

A Middle-Class Experiment.

The idea of co-operating for mutual supply is so obviously a reasonable one that it is not surprising to find that other than working-class experiments have been made. The wonder is that there have not been more of them, but the average middle-class English folk are very

suspicious of anything out of the ordinary, and Co-operative undertakings are foredoomed to failure in an atmosphere of suspicion.

An enterprising accountant did on one occasion try to stimulate a move towards middle-class Co-operation in Bristol. The exact date is doubtful, but it was certainly prior to 1886. The prospectus which he issued ran as follows:—

THE BRISTOL AND CLIFTON CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION LIMITED.

The object of this Association is to purchase certain articles of food, &c., to be sold to the members of the Association *only*, at the lowest price that shall ensure a safe margin for necessary expenses.

The expected advantage to be derived will be the saving of from 20 to 30 per cent on present prices.

The number of members will be not less than 500 and not exceeding 1,000.

Each member to pay an entrance fee of £1, and to take one share only of £2, £1 of which shall be paid up.

A Provisional Committee has been formed to carry out these objects, and have decided in the first instance to direct their attention to butcher's meat.

For particulars apply to Bramley White, Accountant, Liverpool Chambers, Corn Street, Bristol.

Further traces of the Association have not been found, which is disappointing. In the light of latter-day Co-operative experience in butchering it would have been interesting to know how our accountant and his friends fared in the business.

THE ANCHOR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

The registered office of this Society is in London, but as it operates also in Bristol, having a Branch shop in Princes Street, it is fitting that some details relative to its constitution and growth should find place in our review.

This Society is quite unique, in that its members were, until quite recently, drawn exclusively from employés of the C.W.S. Even now, as far as the Bristol Branch is

concerned, there are no members outside of those employed by the C.W.S., the open door being confined to the Central in London. Quite frankly, it has to be admitted that the Society was called into being to legalise a privilege. It is the custom in many wholesale houses in London and the provinces to permit their employés to make individual purchases of the wares in which they operate at wholesale price, or even at less than wholesale price. The constitution of the C.W.S. will not permit of selling to any but registered Co-operative Societies. Accordingly, the London Branch employés, with the knowledge and approval of the then existing Board of Directors, in 1881 registered the Anchor Co-operative Society, which was admitted a member of the federation in the following year, and started business immediately.

In the early days purchases were confined very largely to boots and shoes, drapery, clothing, and furniture; a little grocery and provision trade was done, the chief items being tea, butter, and occasionally cheese; there was no shop, and the only permanent official was the Secretary, who scrutinised very closely orders given by members that no abuses might creep in. It was understood that, except where the C.W.S. ordinarily broke bulk, members either had to take an unbroken package or go without; the exceptions being, as aforesaid, tea, butter, and cheese. In respect to these, it was customary to canvass for orders to equal the full package, and a couple of the warehouse staff were deputed to stay behind after hours on Thursday evenings to weigh up and parcel the goods.

Upon the opening of the Bristol Depôt in 1884, certain members of the Anchor Society were transferred from London to take the chief positions in the new depôt; and in August, 1886, when the staff was sufficiently large to warrant this being done, a branch was conceded to the C.W.S. employés of the Bristol Depôt, which Branch has continued to the present date, and is subject to the supervision of the Committee of the Society who sit in London.

Goods are, and always have been, bought from the C.W.S. upon the same terms as other Societies, and sold to members with a small percentage, never exceeding 5 per cent plussed, to cover working expenses. At first 2½ per cent was found quite sufficient for this purpose, and even then there was generally a surplus, which, however, was not restored to the purchasers, as in the case of other Societies, but was devoted to the propagation of Co-operative principles. The Guild of Co-operators, the Women's Guild, the Co-operative Aid Association, funds in aid of struggling Societies, scholarship funds, Co-operative reference libraries, and the Lifeboat fund all received help at various times from the Anchor Society; and among those who were pioneering weak causes in the Metropolis the Society came to be respected for its generous sympathy.

In 1881, when the Anchor Society was first promoted, the Societies in and about London were few and far between. C.W.S. employés, however desirous of patronising Co-operative goods, but for the Anchor Society would have found considerable difficulty in many cases in doing so; but, as Societies began to multiply, which they did with great rapidity between 1886 and 1893, the chief officials of the C.W.S. identified themselves more closely with the Societies in the neighbourhood of their homes, and the trade of the Anchor Society sensibly declined in consequence. Not content with this, however, some of the London Societies raised the cry of "privilege," and demanded that no Society should be permitted to do its retail business on the C.W.S. premises. Resolutions embodying this protest were brought to the Quarterly Meeting of the federation, and, being sound and reasonable propositions, were carried. This was in December, 1894.

The resolutions ran as follows:—

(*a*) That the Society discontinue to supply goods to its employés, Committee, Auditors, and Scrutineers, and that no Society be supplied with goods which does not occupy business premises of its own.

(*b*) That this Society also discontinue selling goods to private individuals or firms, except such goods as are unsaleable to the Co-operative trade, or to any Society not purely distributive, except such goods as are required in the conduct of its business.

In March, 1895, the Committee further reported as follows:—

EMPLOYES' PURCHASES.

As promised at the last Quarterly Meeting, we beg to submit a statement as to the present method of dealing with the employés' purchases at Manchester, which has obtained since 1888.

The employés, Committee, Auditors, and Scrutineers are allowed to purchase goods from any of the departments, for their own and family use, at our ordinary selling prices.

A clerk is specially employed to keep the accounts and deal with the collection of money, and to cover the cost of this a commission of 1¼ per cent is added to the ordinary price of the goods, and the dividend on the purchases is carried to the reserve fund. During the year ending 1894 this commission amounted to £143, and the dividend transferred to reserve fund to £64.

The purchases for the year (including the productive works) in the Manchester district, also purchasing depôts in Ireland and abroad, amounted to £11,143, which represented 1,033 accounts, or an average of £10. 15s. each per annum.

Every precaution is taken to prevent abuse, and each order is carefully scrutinised before being executed.

From 1874 to 1888 somewhat similar regulations were in force, but the account was worked through the Co-operative Furnishing Society, to whom the commission and dividend were paid.

From 1871 to 1874 the employés had an association called the "United Employés' Society." This was governed by a Committee of employés, who appointed their own Secretary, and paid their own expenses of working. All goods were charged to this Employés' Society, and in 1874 the number of purchasers was 134 averaging £17 each per annum.

Prior to 1871 the employés were supplied with goods individually, without any special regulations or organisation.

We may also state that goods are supplied to the following, which are not ordinary distributive Societies:—Agricultural and Horticultural, Anchor, Bagslate Manufacturing, Blackpits Manufacturing, Cottage, Country House, Delph Woollen Manufacturing, Droylsden Sundries, Dudley Bucket and Fender, Dudley Nail, Eccles Manufacturing, Gladstone Spinning Company, Hebden Bridge Fustian, Lancashire and Yorkshire Productive, Rochdale Corn Mill, Thomson and Sons Limited, Working Men's Club and

Institute Union. Manchester:—Co-operative Newspaper Society, Co-operative Insurance, Co-operative Printing, Co-operative Union, Grammar School, Post Office, Corporation.

We have given this question our close consideration, and we recommend that the privilege at present allowed to the employés of purchasing goods from the Grocery and Provision Department be abolished. With regard to the Drapery, Boots, and Furnishing Departments, we think it could still be continued, without, to any appreciable extent, clashing with the trade of the retail Stores.

In times past, too, we have found it advisable to sell on the market goods which we could not well dispose of through our ordinary channels to Co-operative Societies, and especially in cases where such goods bear our own trade mark or brands. These have at times found their way to some trader in the neighbourhood of Co-operative Stores, where the goods have been offered in competition with the Stores, to the detriment of their ordinary trade. We are of opinion that it is preferable to sell these goods to the employés than to sell them to private dealers.

The report of the Committee for the following quarter refers again to the matter, as follows:—

Re Resolutions of Last Quarterly Meeting relating to Employes' Purchases, &c.

Referring to the two resolutions passed at the last Quarterly Meeting regarding the sale of goods to employés and others, we duly proceeded to carry out your instructions, but received an objection from one of our members whom we had refused to supply on the grounds that they were not a "purely distributive Society." The Society contended that our action was illegal, and that there was no power given under the rules to deprive a minority of Societies of their rights duly acquired. Under the circumstances we consulted our own solicitors, also the solicitors to the Co-operative Union, and, whilst they were of opinion that some parts of the resolutions could not be legally enforced, they both advised us to obtain counsel's opinion thereon with a view to an authoritative ruling on the disputed points. The opinion of Sir Richard Webster was accordingly taken, and we give the same as follows:—

"We are of opinion that the Quarterly Meeting had no authority to pass so much of the two resolutions quoted in the instructions as exclude Societies already members which do not occupy business premises of their own, and which are not purely distributive, from dealing with the Wholesale. By such a proposal these Societies are deprived of rights which they now possess. These parts of the resolution are *ultra vires*, and cannot, without their consent, be enforced against Societies already in membership either by a resolution of Quarterly Meeting, by alteration of the rules, by a decision of the General Committee, or otherwise.

"As regards Societies desiring to become members in the future, these restrictions could be made conditions of membership by an alteration of the rules.

"The General Committee has authority to carry out and can give effect to the rest of the two resolutions, as these relate to matters of internal management within their control."

In accordance with this opinion we are executing all orders received from Societies who are members of the Wholesale.

It had been confidently expected by those responsible for the resolutions that the effect would have been to close the Anchor Society, but not so. Steps were taken immediately to secure premises, and to place the Society upon a definite basis. Henceforth the Anchor Society declined to exist upon sufferance. The members felt that their neighbours had dealt somewhat unkindly by them, and they resolved to stand by their rights as a properly-registered Society, and member of the C.W.S. Premises were taken in London and at Bristol; in London a Manager was engaged to put in his full time, and at Bristol one of the warehouse staff was deputed to attend certain evenings in the week. These premises in Bristol were part of a shop opposite the Christmas Street warehouse. When the depôt was removed to Broad Quay and the staff became considerably augmented, larger and more convenient premises were taken in Princes Street, and a Manager engaged. In London, the Society has ceased to limit its membership to the employés, although they still continue to be the backbone of the concern. In Bristol none but employés of the C.W.S. are knowingly permitted to trade. The business is carried on in a rough and ready fashion, and many expenses are thereby saved. Goods are taken more or less in bulk quantities, no attempt is made at display, and but scant attention is paid to the niceties of parcelling, Further, there are no delivery charges, for members fetch their own goods. There is generally no risk involved to the Society, as practically no stock is kept more than a week, and the selling prices are—for groceries and provisions, 5 per cent; other goods, 2½ per cent above the cost price, so that a profit is always sure.

Each member has to hold one 10s. share, and of late years surplus profits have been disposed of as bonuses upon shares.

For obvious reasons, the full rights as members of the federation have not been exercised by the Anchor Society. The first resolution recorded in the Society's minutes reads:—

> That the Society shall take no part in the nomination or election of the officers of the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited, and shall not interfere in any way in the management of the said Society.

This resolution has never been departed from, but in the days when it was difficult to get a quorum for the Divisional Quarterly Meetings of the C.W.S. in the Bristol district the Anchor Society's ticket was helpful towards swelling the numbers.

Prior to the establishment of the Society in a shop of its own, it was customary to defer somewhat to any special regulations the C.W.S. Directors might think it well to make for mutual convenience, but when the business was removed to other premises the Society took its position among other Societies, and claimed the right to manage or mismanage its own affairs in its own way.

As an instance of their deference to the Directors of the C.W.S., the following notice, which was issued to the members in August, 1897, is of interest:—

> ANCHOR SOCIETY: SPECIAL AND IMPORTANT NOTICE.
>
> Acting under instructions from the Directors of the London Branch of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, members of the Anchor Society are informed that all goods had through this source must be paid for on or before delivery. On no account whatever must an account be run, as we have not the time or the strength at our disposal to submit statements and run after accounts, nor the capital necessary for giving credit.
>
> The Secretary receives accounts between 12-30 and 2-30 every Friday, also after 6 on Friday evenings, and we earnestly request all members to facilitate the business in this direction by making their payments to him then.
>
> This regulation is absolutely necessary to the proper working of the Society, and non-compliance will subject the member to expulsion.
>
> THE COMMITTEE.

It will be interesting to note that the business methods of this Society approximate rather towards those of the Civil Service Supply Association, established in 1867 by the officials of the London Post Office; and, had the model been closely followed, there is no doubt that a much larger business would have been built up, and that, too, at considerable gain to the shareholders. This, however, was not the objective of the founders, nor has it been the objective of the later executive. Even in the London area there has been no desire to limit the body of shareholders, although it is true the executive is selected only from those members who are C.W.S. employés.

The number of shareholders on the register of the C.S.S.A. in December, 1909, was nearly 7,000, and these govern the institution. The business is maintained by a much more numerous body of ticket-holders, probably not less than 70,000, of whom about one-third would be civil servants.

The original shares were £1 each. For many years the net profits accumulated in a surplus fund account, which was ultimately capitalised, and the £1 shares became eight £10 shares, £80. These were at a later date again divided, and became eighty £1 shares, £80. Each of these £1 shares is now worth about £2. 17s. 6d., and according to the present value the dividend pays as an investment about 4½ per cent, and it has remained at this figure for some years.

Had the Anchor Society followed this course of procedure it would have forfeited its claim to be counted as a democratic Co-operative Society of the Rochdale type. It would have gained the world, but lost its soul.

The South Bristol Working Men's Co-operative Society.

Formed as the result of a disagreement with some of the Bedminster members, the South Bristol Working Men's Co-operative Society, in the short space of four

years, spun out a bare existence and died. Those credulous folk who thought that Co-operation could flourish by a policy of " beggar my neighbour " lost their money, and, one may venture to hope, gained the experience, " In things essential, unity."

It will be remembered in the account given of the Bedminster Society that considerable controversy arose towards the close of 1900 through the enforced resignation of Mr. Gray (Secretary). Out of this controversy the demand arose from the dissentients for a new Society, with Mr. Gray as Secretary. The proposal quickly matured, and on April 2nd, 1901, the rules of the South Bristol Working Men's Co-operative Society were registered. The signatories were—Sidney Hamblin, President; Samuel Walter James, Vice-President; Samuel C. Lovell, Treasurer; William Gray, Secretary; William Millard, Alfred Summerall, Samuel Isaac Greeds, William James Moore, Giles Plummer, Alfred James Taylor—some of these time-honoured names among Bedminster Co-operators. But for them it is doubtful whether the movement would have ever had sufficient support to give it practical shape.

At the outset a check was experienced, in that—mindful of its origin—neither the Co-operative Union nor the C.W.S. would countenance the Society. Many of the regulations laid down in the rules were quite unique in modern Co-operative procedure, and remind one of the days when Co-operators had to rely upon their unaided sense of what was fit and proper before an understanding had been arrived at by actual experience. For instance, no individual member was permitted to hold an interest in the shares of the Society exceeding £20. A strange way, certainly, of providing working people with an incentive to thrift. The rule relating to division of profits was another relic of the past. Thus :—

> The net profits of all business carried on by the Society, after paying or providing for the expenses of management and dividends upon paid-up subscriptions, shall, once in every quarter, be applied to all or any of the following purposes, and in such proportion as

may be agreed upon at any Quarterly Meeting, namely: To the increase of the capital or business of the Society; to any provident purpose; to a dividend among the members of the Society in proportion to the amount of their purchases of the goods of the Society during the past quarter; and to the payment of any part not exceeding one-third of such net profits to or amongst the other members or other persons employed on account of the Society, in respect of any work or service done by them respectively on behalf of the Society.

When stripped of redundant verbiage, this rule would seem to approximate rather towards the methods of benevolent joint-stockism than to Co-operation, for the emphasis is certainly laid upon dividend on capital rather than upon consumption.

In due course premises were taken at No. 88, West Street, singularly enough the locality chosen by other pioneers before them. For four years they struggled against circumstances which were in the end too powerful for them, and after a fruitless endeavour to be reckoned in the general amalgamation were voluntarily liquidated in April, 1905.

On March 23rd, 1905, the statement of liabilities and assets prepared by Mr. James White, the liquidator, was as follows :—

Liabilities.	£	s.	d.	Assets.	£	s.	d.
Members' Share Capital	291	4	3	Stock.....	75	0	0
Creditors' Trade .	247	8	6	Fixtures (?)	135	7	6
Expenses.....	16	8	11	Members' Debts ..	49	14	1½
				Cash in hand and Bank	7	15	11
				Deficit.....	287	4	1½
	£555	1	8		£555	1	8

The item £135. 7s. 6d. for fixtures was certain to be an over estimation, being simply that brought forward from previous accounts. It is evident from these figures that the Society, for some time, had been in a bankrupt condition, and there could be no possible hope of recovery. It is also tolerably clear that not only members, but

wholesale suppliers, had to lose pretty considerably from this abortive attempt to introduce competition into Co-operation in Bristol.

Bristol Beehive Thrift Society.

The Bristol Beehive Thrift Society was registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1893 on September 8th, 1897. For some time previously the Association had existed as a Small Savings Bank for the use of C.W.S. employés, but, as the transactions began to assume rather large proportions, it was considered advisable, at this date, to constitute a Society with proper legal safeguards.

Subject to thirteen special rules, the members accepted the general rules for an Industrial and Provident Society as set forth by the Co-operative Union. The special object of the Society was to carry on the business of banking, and shareholders were confined to employés of the Bristol Depôt of the C.W.S. Capital was raised by transferable shares of 5s. each; the method of disposing of profits was left to the members' meeting to decide upon.

The rules were signed by C. Cunningham, H. R. Adams, C. H. Bickell, R. Burnell, James Jenkins, H. G. Ford, A. R. Oliver, and James White (Secretary). Since then the Society has extended its operations beyond the limits of banking, and now several other beneficent objects are included in its programme. In December, 1909, the membership of the Society was 215.

The Penny Bank continues to retain its popularity, the number of accounts dealt with being 128, having no less a sum than £907 standing to their credit in December, 1909. Three and a half per cent interest is added quarterly.

One of the features of the Society's business is the provision of Outing and Holiday Funds. These are intended to assist depositors to save sufficient week by week that at the annual beanfeast, or fortnight's holiday,

the strain of unusual expenditure may not be felt. Every member subscribes to the holiday fund, at once an indication of the manner in which it is appreciated.

The methods adopted are as follows. Shares are issued to the value of £1 each, payable by weekly subscriptions of 6d. for each share. The total value of shares held is paid out when the member takes his or her annual holiday. No interest is paid on the shares. The balance accruing at the end of the year is paid over to each shareholder one week prior to Christmas. Subject to the Committee's approval, the number of shares which can be taken by one individual is unlimited.

The soundness of the scheme depends very largely upon the fact that during the first months of the year funds are accumulating in the Society's hands at slight interest. Later, when the pressure of the holiday season causes large withdrawals, they are prepared for the strain, and can easily obtain overdrafts in case of necessity. In 1909 nearly £1,000 was dealt with under the two funds of Outings and Holidays.

A third activity promoted by the Society is the provision of a Sick and Burial Fund. So far as sick benefit is concerned, payment is only made after the employés' wages cease. It is necessary to say this to explain the extraordinary benefits offered.

TABLE OF BENEFITS.

MALES—	
Contributions	2d. per week.
Members under 16, for half benefits, contribute...	1d. ,,
Sick Pay—First 12 weeks	15/- ,,
Second 12 weeks	7/6 ,,
Payment on Death—Member,	£10
Member's Wife	£5
FEMALES (Age of admission, 16 years)—	
Contributions	1d. per week.
Sick Pay—First 12 weeks	6/- ,,
Second 12 weeks	3/- ,,
Death Benefit	£5

The balance of this fund, after meeting all liabilities, is apportioned annually, and credited to members' individual accounts.

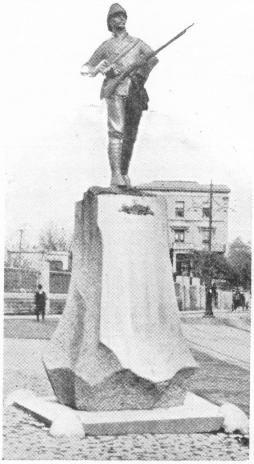
This Sick Benefit Fund has been working on its present basis for three years, and the following is an analysis of the results:—

BRANCH.	Total Contributions.	Sick Pay During Year.	Percentage of Sickness to Total Contributions.	Balance for Apportionment.	Apportionment to Members.	To Reserve Fund, as per Rule.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Male 1907	40 1 6	24 7 6	60	13 9 0	0 2 6	2 5 0
,, ...1908	42 9 1	14 12 6	34	25 2 3	0 5 3	2 10 0
,, ...1909	45 18 9	6 0 0	12	37 3 3	0 7 0	2 15 6
Female .1909	8 17 8	1 13 0	18	6 4 2	0 3 0	1 0 6

Under the ægis of this Society much valuable educational work has been done among C.W.S. employés. Classes and lectures have been held, and within recent years a most excellent Male Voice Choir and a Literary and Dramatic Society have developed under their fostering care. An Athletic Club, including football, cricket, cycling, and swimming sections, has also appropriated the name of "Beehive," as testifying to the honour of the parent organisation. The Club does not draw upon the funds of the Society.

One other fund, not strictly connected with the Beehive, yet which was brought into being at a Beehive meeting, is the Benevolent Fund. This is a weekly free-will offering on the part of each employé who desires to join, to leave in the hands of an elected Committee sums of money for the relief of distress either amongst their own membership or elsewhere. In 1909 £40 was thus collected and distributed among public charities.

Year.	No. of Members.	Liabilities.			Assets.					Sales.	Expenses.	Net Profit.
		Share.	Acco'nts Owing.	Reserve.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.	Bank and Cash in Hand.			
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1882	38	2	2	6	...	...	7	3	...	577	...	5
1883	56	3	4	...	...	...	...	2	...	904	...	1
1884	75	34	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1665	...	5
1885	93	40	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	1972	...	...
1886	118	8	...	53	...	...	65	...	...	2053	...	22
1887	151	10	...	64	...	...	70	...	...	2356	...	22
1888	164	12	...	...	...	...	80	...	...	2256	...	11
1889	167	14	...	...	...	...	80	...	...	2298	...	29
1890	219	16	...	90	...	...	88	...	...	2652	...	24
1891	228	19	...	100	...	...	90	...	...	3424	75	15
1892	300	23	...	114	...	...	121	...	...	3861	83	29
1893	315	25	...	...	...	...	176	...	...	3897	...	...
1894	340	26	...	98	...	...	...	...	...	4467	92	19
1895	450	82	397	...	50	28	212	180	99	4977	181	...
1896	600	127	220	75	61	...	184	78	102	5562	221	40
1897	646	148	92	126	63	...	282	13	77	6931	280	153
1898	600	201	96	114	75	...	310	30	...	6624	208	190
1899	643	261	399	125	85	...	445	110	254	8256	222	192
1900	746	299	276	154	90	...	487	97	178	9348	228	236
1901	794	351	312	200	99	...	669	139	109	9863	239	295
1902	843	360	...	212	115	...	249	125	...	10511	281	151
1903	887	419	...	212	128	...	690	53	...	9759	310	145
1904	869	391	...	292	167	...	...	137	...	9278	288	195
1905	858	421	...	290	137	...	966	37	...	8887	303	...
1906	792	388	...	346	230	...	1104	81	...	9639	323	100
1907	769	457	...	371	255	82	751	85	...	11315	379	45
1908	766	494	...	354	285	74	855	128	...	12003	370	15
1909	781	502	...	300	304	66	898	198	...	13620	406	46
Bristol Branch 1909	240	...	...	...	25	...	...	12	16	4412	154	...



BOOK III.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT OF TO-DAY.

Chapter I.—Modern Methods and Ideals.

Chapter II.—Co-operation in Bread Supply.

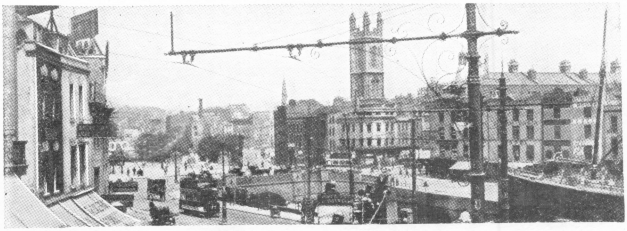
Chapters III. and IV.—Co-operative Education.

Chapter V.—The Women's Co-operative Guild.

Chapter VI.—Associations of Producers.

Chapter VII.—The Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited.

Chapter VIII.—The Co-operative Union Limited.



CHAPTER I

Modern Methods and Ideals.

INDUSTRIAL Co-operation of to-day in Bristol dates back to 1882. By that time the movement in Great Britain had become fairly established, and, apart from the fact that its operations had received the blessing of leading economists and statesmen, its own inherent vitality had evolved a practical working constitution, not too rigid to suppress local initiative, but sufficiently definite and clear to influence Co-operative thought and method towards a generally constructive policy. In short, there were already in existence the beginnings of a "State within a State."

Both the Co-operative Union and the Co-operative Wholesale Society were powerful and well-informed institutions, in consequence of which the pioneers of the new movement in Bristol had, for the mere asking, a fund of experience, theoretical and practical, placed at their disposal. Moreover, some of their number had been members of the old Societies, and knew there were pitfalls into which, but for competent guides, they might easily slip.

Thus it is not surprising that from the start the new Societies linked themselves with the Co-operative Union and the C.W.S., taking advantage of experience already gained, and, in due course, adding their own to the common stock.

The Model Rules of the Co-operative Union were taken as applicable in a general sense to themselves, and, for the time being, but few special rules were made; but, as time went on, as will be seen by reference to the detailed history given elsewhere, others were added as occasion required. These Model Rules provide for those safeguards required by the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, and also afford guidance to the beginner in Co-operative Store-keeping upon such matters as subscription and withdrawal of share capital, the responsibility of officials, the division of profit, depreciation, and reserve funds.

In Bristol the course of procedure approximates to the following:—

Share Capital.—Each member has to hold at least one transferable £1 share, but the maximum holding is limited to £200 by the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893.

Subscriptions may be made by instalments of not less than 3s. 3d. per quarter.

Liability.—Each member's liability is limited to the amount of share capital held.

Interest.—A maximum of 5 per cent is paid, depending upon a ratio of purchases to share holding.

Methods of Business.—Goods are bought wholesale and sold retail at the price prevailing in the district, subject to a reasonable profit.

In order to eliminate the middleman's profits the Society manufactures those goods which can be efficiently

and economically dealt with by themselves, or concentrates upon those which are manufactured by the C.W.S.

Profits.—After providing for a bonus to labour, an education fund, depreciation, and reserve, the profits are divided among the members in proportion to their purchases.

Membership is open to both sexes, and is unlimited.

Government.—The administration is in the hands of a Committee elected by ballot by the members from among themselves. One member one vote is the invariable rule.

Members' Meetings.—Monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly meetings are held; monthly, to report progress and discuss the administration; quarterly, to pass resolutions; half yearly, to receive the Committee's report and balance sheet, to elect the Committee, and to decide the future conduct of the Society.

Balance Sheets are prepared half yearly and audited by public auditors.

A Return of the business transactions of the Society, duly certified by the Society's auditors, has to be sent every year to the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Thus it will be seen that the benefits of the Society are open to all who care to join. Shareholders are amply protected, and there is complete democratic control.

But it is rarely that one hears the critic of Co-operation upon such matters as these. It is seldom, if ever, that those who set themselves to be mentors to the great mass of Co-operators take the pains to ascertain anything more about the movement than what appear to be "facts" according to their more or less superficial observation. Two examples will suffice.

Complaint is often brought against Co-operative Societies that their profits are not, like those of public companies, assessed for income tax. This complaint is founded upon the erroneous assumption that profits, and not individual incomes, are taxed. By far the largest proportion of shareholders in a Co-operative Society are of the working class, whose incomes, including interest and dividend, do not reach £160 per year, and who would be entitled to reclaim individually from the Government were such tax assessed in bulk. Each Society is required to return a list of members likely to be liable, and it is probable that few, if any, Co-operative members who are liable escape assessment. Co-operative Societies are assessed upon their holding of property under Schedules A and B, and the Bristol Society in 1908 handed over £78 to the Government as its quota thereto.

Another very common complaint urged against the Co-operative movement is that, by the operation of the system, a very estimable class—the trader—is victimised.

This, too, is based upon the fallacious assumption that a community exists for the trader. The community evidently thinks otherwise. Apart from the growth of Co-operative Societies, the extraordinary development of company-promoted multiple shops is quite sufficient proof. The storeman, no less than the manufacturer, in the future, will be the servant, not the master. The problem is whether he shall be the servant of the capitalist or the consumer, of an unmoral or a moral system of co-operation.

In making the claim for Industrial Co-operation that the system tends towards morality in trade relationships, it is not necessary to ignore the fact that the great majority of Co-operative members have been persuaded to join the Store from no higher consideration than that

which prompts the average investor to become a partner in an industrial concern registered under the Companies Acts. In the main, persons who join Co-operative Societies are no better, no worse, than others, but the extension of the Co-operative method induces a great moral awakening among the shareholders, such as finds no parallel in those businesses run for the promotion of larger interest upon capital investment. Twenty-five years of Industrial Co-operation in Bristol illustrates this fact to a degree little realised, even by those mainly responsible for the change.

In the treatment of labour, the movement in Bristol started certainly upon no higher plane than the average privately-owned business; their natural comrades, the trade unionists, were very critical of Co-operators upon this point for some years, and the sting of those criticisms still remains. But such has been the advance that it is doubtful if any business house in Bristol could approach Co-operators at the present time in respect to just wages and conditions of employment. In this respect the movement has demonstrated the truth of Mr. Ruskin's position, that—

> All right relations between master and operative, and all their best interests, ultimately depend upon balances of justice; meaning, in the term justice, to include affection, such affection as one man owes to another.

A gradual improvement in conditions has been taking place since 1898, and, for the better comparison, details in each stage of development are here tabulated.

COMPARISON OF WAGES SCALE

Grade of Employé.	1898. Minimum Age.	1898. Minimum Rate.	1898. Maximum Rate.	1898. Yearly Advance.	1900. Minimum Age.	1900. Minimum Rate.	1900. Maximum Rate.	1900. Yearly
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s.
Office—								
General Secretary	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Assistant Secretary	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Cashier	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Clerks	..	..	..	..		..	..	
"	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Packing Department—								
Forewoman	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Weighers and Packers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
" " "	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Grocery Department—								
Manager		General	Manag	er.		General	Manag	er.
Branch Managers	Under £80 a week	27 0	29 0	..	Under £80 a week	27 0	29 0	
" "	£80 to £90 a week	..	31 0	..	£80 to £90 a week	..	31 0	
" "	£90 to £100 a week	..	33 0	..	£90 to £100 a week	..	33 0	
"	£100 and over	..	35 0	..	£100 and over	..	35 0	
First Hands	8 years' exper.	25 0	26 0	..	7 years' exper.	25 0	26 0	
Second Hands	7 years' exper.	23 0	24 0	..	6 years' exper.	23 0	24 0	
Assistants	6 years' exper.	20 0	22 0	..	5 years' exper.	20 0	22 0	
Warehousemen	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Porters	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Juniors	14	6 0	18s. at 20	..	14	6 0	18s. at 20	
Coal Department—								
Manager		General	Manag	er.		General	Manag	er.
Foreman	..	22 0	30 0	2 0	..	24 0	30 0	2
Loaders and Hauliers	21	18 0	22 0	1 0	21	20 0	22 0	1
Scale Lads	16	10 0	16 0	2 0	16	10 0	19s. at 17	..

ROM 1898 TO 1908.

	1902.			1905				1908.				Increases.	
	Minimum Rate.	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum Age.	Minimum Rate.	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum Age.	Minimum Rate.	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum.	Maximum.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40 0	60 0	2 6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	..	..	..	45 0	..	*	..	45 0	..	*	..	..
6	6s. to 10s.	..	..	14–16	6s. to 10s.	..	..	14–16	6s. to 10s.	..	2 0	..	..
1	13s. to 25s.	35 0	3 0 after 25s., 2s.	17–21	13s. to 25s.	35 0	3 0 after 25s., 2s.	17–21	13s. to 25s.	35 0	3 0 after 25s., 2s.	..	..
	..	..	..	..	12 0	..	*	..	16 0	..	*	4 0	..
	..	..	..	14 & 15	5s. to 6s. 6d.	..	..	14 & 15	5s. to 6s. 6d.	..	..	..	..
	..	..	..	16	8 0	11 0	1 0	16	8 0	15 0	1 0	..	4 0
	General	Manager.		..	60 0	..	*	..	60 0	..	*	..	..
	32 0	55 0	†	..	33 6	55 0	‡	..	35 0	55 0	§	8 0	16 0
	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	28 0	30 0	1 0	..	30 0	32 0	1 0	..	31 0	33 6	1 0	7 0	7 6
	..	..	..	22	26 0	28 0	1 0	22	27 0	30 0	1 0	4 0	6 0
1	24 0	26 0	2 0	21	24 0	26 0	2 0	21	24 0	26 0	2 0	4 0	4 0
	28 0	30 0	1 0	..	28 0	30 0	1 0	..	28 0	30 0	1 0	..	..
7	12 0	26s. at 21	after 24s., 1s.	17	12 0	26s. at 21	after 24s., 1s.	17	12 0	26s. at 21	after 24s., 1s.	..	..
4	6 0	22s. at 20	..	14	6 0	22s. at 20	..	14	6 0	22s. at 20	..	..	4 0
	General	Manager.		..	45 0	..	*	..	45 0	..	*	..	..
..	26 0	34 0	..	..	26 0	30 0	1 0	..	27 0	33 0	1 0	5 0	3 0
1	19 0	24 0	..	18	16 0	24s. at 21	..	18	16 0	26s. at 21	1 0	1 0	4 0
8	15 0	18 0	1 6	18	15 0	19 0	2 0	18	15 0	19 0	2 0	1 0	3 0

* At the discretion of the Committee.

† £75 per week, 33s. 6d. An increase of 6d. for every £10 additional sales.

‡ £50 per week, 33s. 6d. An increase of 9d. for every £12. 10s. additional sales. Deductions for decreases from any causes.

§ £50 per week, 35s. An increase of 3d. for every £4 additional sales. Deductions for decreases, *unless* through opening of branch stores.

COMPARISON OF WAGES SCA

Grade of Employé.	1898. Minimum Age.	1898. Minimum Rate.	1898. Maximum Rate.	1898. Yearly Advance.	1900. Minimum Age.	1900. Minimum Rate.	1900. Maximum Rate.
Tailoring Department—		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.
Manager	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Shopman	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bakery Department—							
Manager	..	..	..	..		General	Manag er
Assistant Manager	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreman	..	32 0	40 0	2 0	..	32 0	40 0
Inspectors	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Firemen	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Delivery Manager	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Deliverers	16	10 0	16 0	2 0	17	12 0	23s. at 22
,,	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Adults in Productive Dept.	..	18s. to 26s.	22s. to 28s.	..	..	18s. to 26s.	22s. to 28s.
Drapery Department (Hardware and Furnishing)—							
Manager		General	Manag er.			General	Manag er
Branch Manageress	8 years' exper.	14 0	18 0	..	8 years' exper.	15 0	20 0
First Hands	4 years' exper.	10 0	14 0	..	4 years' exper.	11 0	15 0
Assistants	14	4 0	8 6	1 6	14	4 0	8 6
Boot and Shoe Department—							
Manager							
Male Assistants							
First Hands		do.				do.	
Assistants							
Stable Department—							
Horsekeeper	..	..	..	..	..	26 0	30 0
Assistant	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stablemen and Washers	..	..	..	..	19	17 0	22 0
,, ,,	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stable Lads	..	..	..	..	17	12 0	16 0
Building Department—							
Manager	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Others	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

M 1898 TO 1908—*continued.*

1902.			1905.				1908.				Increases.	
Minimum Rate.	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum Age.	Minimum Rate	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum Age.	Minimum Rate.	Maximum Rate.	Yearly Advance.	Minimum.	Maximum.
s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
40 0	60 0	..	..	40 0	..	*	..	40 0	..	*	..	..
24 0	34 0	2 0	21	24 0	36 0	2 0	21	24 0	36 0	2 0	..	2 0
eneral	Manag	er.	..	45 0	..	*	..	45 0	..	*	..	..
42 0	60 0	2 6	..	..	..	..	..	43 0	..	*	1 0	..
32 0	40 0	2 0	..	36 0	42 0	2 0	..	36 0	42 0	2 0	4 0	2 0
28 0	30 0	1 0	..	32 0	..	..	..	32 0	..	..	4 0	..
26 0	30 0	2 0	..	28 0	30 0	1 0	..	28 0	30 0	1 0	2 0	..
40 0	50 0	2 6	..	42 0	..	*	..	42 0	..	*	2 0	..
20s. to 24s.	..	..	19–21	20s. to 24s.	..	2 0	19–21	20s. to 24s.	..	2 0	4 0	..
24 0	26 0	..	22	26 0	30 0	1 0	22	26 0	30 0	1 0	2 0	4 0
18s. to 29s.	19s. to 31s.	..		Not	less	than	Trade	Union	Rates.		..	..
eneral	Manag	er.	..	40 0	..	*	..	40 0	..	*	..	..
16 0	18 0	..	19	18 0	21 0	..	19	18 0	21 0	1 0	4 0	3 0
18 0	20 0	..	20	18 0	20 0	..	20	18 0	20 0	1 0	8 0	6 0
4 0	16s. at 19	..	14	4 0	16s. at 19	..	14	4 0	16s. at 19	..	..	..
30 0	50 0	..	..	35 0	..	*	..	35 0	..	*	5 0	..
..	..	..	21	24 0	..	*	21	24 0	..	*	..	..
18 0	20 0	..	20	18 0	20 0	..	20	18 0	20 0	..	..	..
4 0	16s. at 19	..	14	4 0	16s. at 19	..	14	4 0	16s. at 19	..	..	..
30 0	40 0	1 6	..	35 0	..	*	..	35 0	..	*	9 0	..
..	..	..	..	26 0	30 0	1 0	..	26 0	34 0	1 0	..	..
20 0	25 0	1 0	20	22 0	..	..	20	22 0	..	..	4 0	..
..	..	..	21	24 0	26 0	..	21	24 0	26 0	..	..	..
14 0	18 0	..	17	14 0	20s. at 19	..	17	14 0	20s. at 19	..	2 0	4 0
..	..	..	..	50 0	..	*	..	50 0	..	*	..	..
..	..	..			At	Trade	Union	Rates.			..	..

* At the discretion of the Committee.

HOLIDAYS.

	1900.	1908.
	Working days.	Working days.
Heads of Departments	9	12
Storekeepers	9	9
Others over 18	6	6
,, under 18	4	6

Bonus to Labour.—In the division of profits, 5 per cent is allocated as bonus to all employés, divided in proportion to wages earned.

Bonds.—The Society requires each employé to enter into a bond for faithful service. Such bond is made up by transferring quarterly bonus, or by weekly instalments until the total fixed (£10 for persons over eighteen years of age, and £2 for those under eighteen) is made up, except in special cases decided by the Committee and agreed upon in the bond. No deductions are made from wages for transfer to bond.

With regard to the number of hours worked, a no less striking revolution has taken place. In the early days, Co-operative Committees were constantly being reproached by their trade unionist brethren on this account. As recently as 1898 Bedminster Co-operators were pleading justification for working their bakers seventy-five hours a week. To-day the maximum hours in that department are fifty-six per week, while in the general trading department they are even less, viz., fifty-four.

These comparative statements indicate advance all along the line, and clearly show that a principle once accepted in Co-operative practice is capable of progressive adjustment in respect to detail when the facts become sufficiently understood. The wages scale of 1898 was accepted as a first step, although it by no means satisfied

those who were agitating for ideal conditions for employés; but, upon the basis of that which was already written down, it was found easily possible to press for amendments, always for a higher standard, as opportunities presented themselves. The minimum of 24s. per week for adult labour (twenty-one years of age) was accepted as a definite standard in 1904, and while the scale of 1905 seems to conform in one department to that which is often urged against minimums, *i.e.*, that they tend to become maximums, the scale of 1908 shows this to have been but short lived, for even in the Coal Department loaders and hauliers may now qualify for 26s. from a minimum of 24s. If upon no other grounds, at least upon this, that a standard living wage has been set up for those on the bottom rung, the Co-operative movement in Bristol has justified its existence.

But it has done more. It has provided a training-school wherein the working classes may learn, from practical experience, the art of administration and the responsibilities attaching to financial affairs. Seeing that the obvious trend of general public administration is towards a larger share falling to that class generally understood as the workers, it cannot but be gain to the community that this preliminary experience has been thus afforded to so large a section of the future representatives of the nation.

Not less than 300 persons have served upon Management Committees of one or other of the Societies, and a considerably larger body, perhaps in the aggregate numbering 1,000, have followed the business operations of the movement in connection with the monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly business meetings. Of these, fully one half would be associated together in the educational and propaganda work carried on in systematic fashion, aided by funds set apart for the purpose from the profits.

A large proportion of these are women, who, through their Guilds, have been for the past sixteen years studying problems of citizenship, preparing themselves

for the time when they will be called upon to exercise themselves in a practical manner in affairs of State, even as they have done from the commencement in the Co-operative movement.

In estimating the worth of Industrial Co-operation to the community such facts as these must not be left out of account, for any system which tends to raise the moral and intellectual standard of the people, or even a considerable portion of the people, must command the respect of all true lovers of mankind.

But, apart from considerations such as these, there are others of wider application: those which affect *every purchasing member* associated with the movement, whether active or passive in respect to matters of government or methods of business procedure. The membership of 15,000 in January, 1910, had a share-holding of £113,829, in individual amounts ranging from £1 to £200, the limit allowed by law.

For the greater part, this sum was made up of accumulated dividends upon purchases, and represented an actual net gain to the recipients thus favoured.

This will be better illustrated by a few concrete examples:—

STATEMENT SHOWING VARIOUS MEMBERS' SAVINGS IN THE SOCIETY.

Member.	Date of Joining.	Total Cash Subscriptions.			Total Dividend on Purchases.			Total Interest added.			Amount standing to Credit, Dec., 1909.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
No. 1	1891	1	0	0	81	10	4	49	14	1	132	4	5
,, 2	1894	1	0	0	28	16	4	12	5	0	42	1	4
,, 3	1894		...		37	7	10½	16	2	6	53	10	4½
,, 4	1900		...		46	14	11½	11	8	1	58	3	0½
,, 5	1904		...		10	9	5½	1	4	3	11	13	8½
,, 6	1895		...		55	15	8½	23	12	8½	*79	8	5

* The member died in 1907, and the whole of this amount was handed over to the widow.

It should be observed that Nos. 1, 4, and 6 of these members were rather abnormal purchasers, probably very loyal supporters of the Store, and requiring much provision and clothing for their families. Nos. 2, 3, and 5, however, were quite modest purchasers, Nos. 2 and 3 being responsible for an average of between £12 and £14 per quarter, and No. 5, who was the head of a small household, purchased to the extent of £7 or £8 per quarter only. It should further be noted that, whereas Nos. 1 and 2 deposited their first £1 in cash (paid in instalments), the remaining four members contributed their quota to the share capital of the Society entirely from dividends earned by purchasing the goods they required. They literally ate themselves into accumulation of capital.

But, it may be urged, this is evidence that the Co-operative is a thrift movement, but does not indicate that it helps towards an immediate solution of the pressing needs of working people. How far, for instance, has Co-operation helped to solve the unemployment question? To this, reply may be made: directly, but little; but indirectly, much. At least half the net profit divided each quarter is withdrawn; the examples given above are typical of but half the full amount declared for dividend. A very large number of members cannot afford to allow their dividends to accumulate; every penny they can scrape together means a little more comfort in the home. Boots for the children, clothes for father or mother, are purchased with the "divi." money, and not only does this represent an increase in the spending power of the purchaser, but incidentally it sets up a demand for commodities which, but for the operations of the Store, could not have existed, and this eventually means a larger demand for labour.

By those who would decry the Co-operative movement it is often asserted that the dividend upon purchases is a fictitious boon, the purchaser either having to pay enhanced prices or suffer in the quality of goods purchased. The general public, it is true, are credulous, and easily influenced towards schemes which seem to promise

something for nothing; and, seeing that this is a favoured method of the astute trader who has wares to market, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that he measures up the Co-operative dividend from the same standpoint, for this plea is generally put forth by the trading class. But the Co-operator knows differently. The balance-sheet indicates how the business is conducted. It is inconceivable that the public would continue to uphold the present-giving ventures of "private enterprise" were such transactions laid bare by the rigid analysis of expense accounts, trade, and profit and loss accounts, audited by public officials, such as have to be placed before Co-operators at stated intervals.

The markets of the world are open to Co-operators as they are to individualists, and the C.W.S., from whom from 72 to 80 per cent of the local Society's purchases are made, is an institution honoured in all parts of the globe for its integrity in business and the keen capacity of its representatives. Elsewhere it is shown how this federation of Societies is able to get into closer touch with the actual producer than is possible to the average trading organisation; and its operations, too, have to stand the test of periodical examination and discussion from the representatives of Societies. An excessive profit is always a matter for keen criticism.

As to the question of quality of goods, the actual productions of the movement are, in the main, of an exacting standard, particularly in foodstuffs; and the general experience is that cheap and nasty goods are condemned by Co-operators. Wherever a Society yields to temptations to substitute price for quality in purchases the practice invariably leads to accumulation of bad stock.

It is not always easy to demonstrate that charges such as these brought against the Co-operative movement are false. Usually the issue is clouded in a controversy as to estimates of value, but in one department, at any rate, unmistakable comparisons can be made; and if, in this

one, Co-operators can be shown to serve the public as well or better than the competitive traders, it is fair to assume that other departments average as well. This department is the bakery, in Bristol by far the largest and certainly the most successful department, so much so that special recognition to this branch of the Society's operations is accorded in this work.

From friend and foe alike it is unquestioned that the Bristol Society's output of bread is entitled to the description of "best quality;" but the price charged is never in advance of that charged by private bakers officially recognised as turning out "best quality" bread. The price of bread is a very important consideration in the working-class home, and an advance in the price of this household commodity is certain to be criticised sharply by members at the monthly and quarterly meetings; so before taking such a step the Management Committee has to be quite sure that it is fully justified. There was a time when the Bakers' Association could exercise its influence in this respect; but, of late years, the Society has been powerful enough to ignore this combination, even to the extent of resisting an advance in price when, in their judgment, the state of the flour market was not sufficiently stable to warrant a permanent increase in the price of bread.

This policy, maintained entirely in the interest of the consumer, has prevented upward fluctuations on more than one occasion, and, whether Co-operators or not, the general public have thus far benefited by having a strong Co-operative Bakery established in Bristol. The fact that this attitude has been opposed by the competitive trade, as represented by the Master Bakers' Association, indicates that there is a real concern on their part lest they be undersold by Co-operators, and is sufficient to refute the charge that Co-operative goods must be of higher price or lower quality in order that the dividend upon purchase may be secured.

But, it may be urged, bread being a peculiar necessity, there is special reason for keeping the price right. The argument may hold good in other commodities.

Take the instance of patent medicines and sundry specialities in a like category. Only a few years ago the manufacturers of these goods combined in order to bring pressure to bear upon the retail trade generally, in respect to the prices at which their goods should be sold. Their avowed object was to prevent underselling. How did these purists regard Co-operation? If the usual anti-Co-operative suggestions as to prices were valid, one might reasonably have expected such an association to welcome the Co-operative Store with open arms; but, on the contrary, they promptly called upon Co-operative Societies to add the proportion of dividend to the usual selling prices of their goods, under the penalty of being refused supplies. To them, the dividend was an element of underselling. Co-operators declined, and many accounts were forthwith closed, giving an impetus to the Drug Department of the C.W.S., which is now supplying in large quantities, and generally at lower prices, goods of at least equal merit.

By Traders' Associations and others pressure has, at times, been brought to bear upon manufacturers of other wares to adopt similar tactics; but generally these have been too wide awake to their own interest to do anything so foolish. One large firm of soap boilers did write to the Bristol and District Society in 1902, asking that the proportion of dividend should be added to the price of their soap sold at the Store, in order that other traders might not be prejudiced.

Such evidences as these should be quite sufficient to dispose of the suggestion that Co-operators have to "pay" for their dividend. It is certain that well-informed individualists do not think so.

The educational work, and the association of women in Guilds, are dealt with in detail elsewhere. Some of these features in the Co-operative programme remind one of the life of the artisan in the Middle Ages. But even more so do the provisions which have been made for the sick and distressed members. Many a family has had

cause to bless the Co-operative Society for help in a practical form in time of need; the contingency fund, expended in grants varying from 5s. to 7s. 6d. according to the necessities of the case, in no sense charity gifts, expresses the true spirit of brotherly and sisterly Co-operation—"All for Each, and Each for All"—and, dispensed by fellow workers, the air of patronage which often accompanies such assistance from other institutions finds no parallel in the Co-operative scheme.

Another good work just recently organised, which owes its inspiration to the Women's Guild, is that of providing on loan medical appliances free to those members who are in need. This department was opened on December 7th, 1908, with a very comprehensive list of necessary articles; and, during the first year, these were taken advantage of to such an extent that additions had to be made. The list at the present moment comprises the following:—

List of Sickroom Articles.

1 Rubber Foot Warmer.
6 Foot Warmers.
1 Arm Sling, Children's (without elbow).
1 Arm Sling, Adult's (without elbow).
1 Bed Cradle.
1 Leg Rest.
4 Round Bed Pans.
3 Slipper Bed Pans.
4 Bed Rests, Web Back.
4 Waterproof Bed Sheets.
2 Small Bronchitis Kettles.
2 Large Bronchitis Kettles, to hang on grate.
2 Pairs of Crutches, Plain.
3 Air Cushions (3 rings).
2 Water Pillows.
1 Invalid Bedside Chair.
1 Water Bed.
1 Ice Bag.
4 Enemas, with disconnecting tubes.
2 Douches, Glass lined.
2 Glass Eyedrops.
2 Eyedrop Cups.
6 Feeding Cups.
6 Spitting Cups (with loose cover).
2 Kermer Throat Sprays.
3 Nasal Sprays.
4 1½oz. Ear Syringes (1502).
2 1½oz. Ear Syringes (4179).
2 Earthenware Urinals (male).
2 Earthenware Urinals (female).
6 1s. Breast Glasses.
1 Invalid Chair.
4 Maternity Bags.

Rules for Lending Sickroom Appliances.

1. They shall be lent to members and employés of the Society for their personal use, or for the use of members' children living under the same roof.

2. All applications must be made to the caretaker, either personally or through the Store Manager, the full name and address given, and member's Pass Book (or duplicate) presented.

3. The time for letting out is as follows: Mondays, 6 to 8 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 to 11 a.m.; Saturdays, 3 to 5 p.m.

4. Members borrowing will be held responsible for damage done to any article whilst in their possession, and must see that each article is thoroughly cleansed and disinfected before being returned. If any article has been used for a case of infectious disease, notice must be sent to the Committee, who will arrange for disinfection by the Bristol Public Health Department.

5. Any person having had an article for four weeks, and wishing to retain the same for a longer period, must renew the application to the Committee. All articles must be returned as soon as done with.

6. All articles must be returned within three days after a written application has been made for them.

The articles are in charge of a caretaker, who is responsible for their being thoroughly disinfected and kept in good order. A Special Committee, elected partly by the members and partly by the Management Committee, is responsible for the department. During the year 1909 there were 183 applications, and 279 articles lent. The cost of running the department was £51. 11s. 4d., defrayed by a grant of £55 from the Society's profits.

In such manner the Co-operators are doing their best to counteract some of the evils brought upon our social organism through haphazard competitive methods. In respect to the larger outlook, politically and municipally, Co-operative opinion cannot be said to have crystallised into any definite shape. The Co-operative Congress at Perth in 1897 decided, by a unanimous vote, that steps should be taken to secure Parliamentary representation for the movement. In accordance with this resolution a circular was addressed to all Co-operative Societies, making certain proposals with regard to procedure and finance, and asking to what extent support might be forthcoming

for the scheme. In due course the question was placed before the Bedminster members at an adjourned Quarterly Meeting on April 2nd, 1898. The attendance was small, but those present endorsed the principle, and agreed to the Society pledging itself to its share in respect of finance. As a whole, the Co-operative movement was but little stirred by the appeal which had been made. The response was so meagre that at the next Congress it was felt it would be better to drop the idea for the present. In order, however, to test the matter more conclusively, the Co-operative Union were instructed to formulate a definite scheme to place before Societies and Conferences of Societies during the year, and report fully as to the position at the Congress of 1900.

The question was discussed at a Conference of Societies convened by the South-Western Section of the Co-operative Union on March 2nd, 1900, a small majority being registered in favour of direct Parliamentary representation. Subsequent Congresses, notably that of 1905, at Paisley, have decided against the proposal, and, at present, the movement seems divided upon the point.

In the main, Co-operators, as individuals, are keenly interested in political affairs, but from all points of view, and no means have as yet been devised to afford the movement specific representation in the national council chamber which do not violate that which is almost a cardinal principle, " In things doubtful, liberty."

So far as municipal affairs are concerned, however, there does seem to be a growing desire to utilise the organisation, financially and otherwise, to forward the candidature of labour candidates. In Bristol the assent to this desire has so far been purely academic. No funds have been voted for the propaganda, but the Society's name has been associated with local labour demonstrations on more occasions than one.

But for the party-colouring of municipal politics, it is exceedingly probable that the Society would figure more prominently in civic affairs; but, while political

interest is permitted to dominate municipal government, it is highly improbable that the Bristol Co-operative Society will be a factor in the settlement of civic questions.

Through its Educational Department, however, it is quite certain that information and inspiration will be disseminated, and ideals of citizenship propagated which, in due course, must find adequate expression in the ballot box.



CHAPTER II.

Co-operation in Bread Supply.

LEEDS and Plymouth Co-operative Societies both started through the establishment of corn mills, for the price and quality of flour have ever been matters for concern in the lives of the working classes. Equally does this apply to bread. It would not have been surprising if Co-operation in Bristol had started with baking bread, for good bread and cheap is the first necessity for working people.

Perhaps it is well, however, that in the early days of both Bedminster and Bristol and District Societies there were other departments to make up for the deficiencies of the bakery, or possibly the movement in Bristol might have come to an untimely end; for the problems incidental to the baking of bread in small quantities and selling the products of their bakery were not the least of the difficulties the pioneers had to surmount.

The Bedminster Bakery was in West Street, and the first purchase recorded was that of four sacks of flour early in 1883, and, for a year or two, the Bakery Department was an unending source of trouble.

The Bristol and District Society was not quite so precipitate. For some time, supplies of bread were secured from a baker, but this method of procedure was never quite satisfactory. The premises rented by them in St. George's Road, known as the British Workman, had an old-fashioned oven in the basement, and an attempt was made to use this, but with little encouragement. Thus in February, 1888, the Committee had to confess that they were by no means satisfied with the

amount of bread sold by the Society. Emphasising their dissatisfaction, they went on to say:—

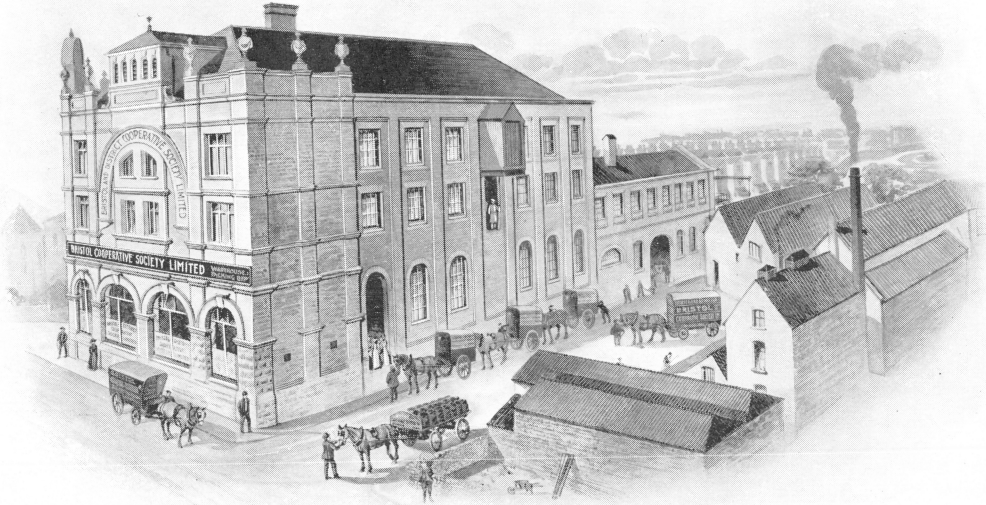
> The worst part of the Society's business is undoubtedly the baking. The quality of the bread is satisfactory, and yet members go elsewhere for the staple article. This is not as it should be.

In May of the same year they returned to the subject with a definite suggestion, ultimately to bear good fruit—

> The bakery has hitherto proved a "white elephant" to the Society, and the last quarter, like previous ones, has tried the patience of members and Committee alike. We, therefore, recommend that a bakery with flour loft and stables be erected.

Thus it is evident that the real start for both Societies only came with the acquisition of their own property. The building of East Street premises in 1886, and of the Lawrence Hill block in 1889, provided Co-operators in Bristol with properly-equipped bakehouses. For some years this accommodation—two crown ovens at Bedminster, and one furnace oven at Bristol and District—proved sufficient to meet the trade; but in the early part of 1892 it became apparent to the officials at Bedminster that sooner or later more room would be required, and, as a consequence, three cottages adjoining their property in Dean Street were secured. Extensions began immediately, and eventually the whole site formerly occupied by these cottages was taken up by the bakery, the latest addition being made in 1898, when, on May 21st, the completed bakery was opened by Mr. Albert Bullock. The equipment by this time included two steam-heated ovens, superseding the old-fashioned crown type, which were forthwith discarded.

The course of development differed considerably in the case of the Bristol and District Society. Following the general revival which took place between 1893 and 1897, the bakery business showed unmistakable signs of congestion in the Lawrence Hill premises, and the question of extension or separation was most earnestly discussed. Eventually, largely owing to the sanguine anticipations of Mr. Lloyd (at that time the President), a purchase of property in Ducie Road was made, with a



OLD BAKERY, DUCIE ROAD, NOW WAREHOUSE, PACKING, BUILDING, AND STABLE DEPARTMENTS.

view to the erection of a first-class steam bakery capable of dealing with 300 sacks of flour per week, at the earliest possible moment.

At the time the total output was equivalent to thirty-five sacks, so the Committee appeared to be looking far enough ahead. Subsequent events have proved them to have been none too sanguine.

The opening of the Bakery took place on Saturday, April 16th, 1898, in the presence of a large body of members, and delegates from some thirty Societies in the West of England. The ceremony was performed by Mr. W. J. Lloyd, to whom Mr. G. H. Butler, C.E. (the architect), presented a gold key as a memento of the occasion. The engine was christened "Progress," and set in motion by Master H. Witty, son of the General Manager. Congratulatory speeches were made by several well-known Bristolians, including Ald. W. H. Elkins, Mr. J. Bennett, the Rev. J. D. Figures, and on behalf of the contractor (Mr. Colston Morris).

At a public meeting in the evening Mr. Joseph Clay (Gloucester), Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett, Mr. J. D. Griffith, and Mr. Bragg added their words of inspiration and encouragement to the proceedings of the day.

In building the new Bakery the Committee had consideration, not only to existing needs, but to an expansion of trade confidently expected as a result of this step.

The premises were substantially built of brick and Pennant stone, and something like £4,000 was expended upon their erection and equipment. The aggregated space of the three floors was 9,000 square feet. The ovens, of which two were immediately installed, and later four added, were of the telescocar type, each capable of taking 200 2lb. loaves, and of baking equivalent to fifty sacks of flour per week.

Trade immediately began to grow, sales went up by leaps and bounds, doubling almost at once, and the step which had been taken was soon seen to have been amply justified. The bakery very quickly proved to be

the best paying asset the Society had, the improved standard of the loaf largely contributing to this satisfactory state of things.

In a smaller degree the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society also succeeded in establishing a reputation for good bread; and their bakery, at the time of amalgamation, had been for some years a valuable stand-by in times of general unrest.

For the year 1904, or just prior to amalgamation, the relative positions of the four Societies concerned, in respect to bread supply, membership, and general trade, were as follows:—

Society.	Members.	General Sales, including Bread.	Bread Produced.		
			Sacks.	Quarterns.	Value.
		£			£
Bedminster	2854	44316	4675	446700	9100
Bristol and District .	7810	141148	15934	1481861	31491
Shirehampton and Avonmouth	415	7316	730	66640	1380
Keynsham.....	60	961	No Bread-making.		
	11139	193741	21339	1995201	41971

As a result of amalgamation it was found possible to concentrate at Ducie Road and East Street, and the Avonmouth Bakery was closed. Trade increased rapidly at both places, and it soon became apparent that more accommodation would have to be found. Then arose the question as to whether extensions should take place at East Street or Ducie Road. In either case, it was felt the step would be but a temporary relief, but the Society was already feeling the burden of buildings, and for a time the idea of fresh responsibility in this direction was put aside. A special Sub-Committee was formed to review the whole situation, and, without much difficulty, it was decided that any extension would have to be on the Bristol side of the Avon. Considerations of cost next had to be taken into account, when it was found that enlargements at Ducie Road would seriously affect the stabling accommodation,

and accordingly the Committee boldly made up their minds to recommend the members to embark in a most ambitious scheme for a new bakery and stables at Whitehall.

On December 14th, 1907, their proposals were laid before the members in the following terms, and carried by a substantial majority. An amendment to defer the scheme indefinitely, and proceed upon the basis of immediate necessities only, was lost by a vote of 49 to 238.

TO THE MEMBERS:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Your Committee have been carefully considering the question referred to them in March last as to the best method of bakery extension.

They have given attention to the two schemes in existence for extension at Ducie Road: (1) A temporary extension in a wood and iron building; (2) A permanent building of two floors adjoining the present bakery.

SCHEME 1. Your Committee entirely disagree with any attempt to meet the requirements by the erection of temporary buildings.

SCHEME 2 provides no additional storage space for flour, or any convenience for working economically, and in our opinion this scheme, if adopted, must be materially altered.

After a visit to the Plymouth Bakery and most careful consideration of the effects of the extension on the membership of the Society, your Committee were faced with a new problem: that, if any further bakery buildings were erected on the Ducie Road site, the removal of all the present stables would be necessary, and then, in the event of still further bakery accommodation having to be provided, there would be no room for such on this site.

Inquiries were made for a suitable place, giving room for the erection of an up-to-date bakery with stable accommodation for the bakery purposes, and where extension could be made, as necessary, to meet the growth of the Society. The land already purchased by the Society at Whitehall appears to possess all these qualifications, and plans have been prepared for laying out this land to the best advantage. These plans show that thirty ovens can be erected, with the necessary space for bread making, cooling and delivery rooms, in such position as to be most economical in working, and also for stabling for twenty-two horses and three hospital stalls or boxes on land adjoining that in the possession of the Society, which your Committee have reason to believe can be purchased on very fair terms.

The main bakery building will be of three floors, giving a loft accommodation of 4,706 sacks of flour, machinery rooms, and bread making room—the ovens, cooling room, and delivery rooms being in ground floor buildings immediately adjoining; and the total cost of these buildings is estimated at £31,215.

Your Committee desire to point out that this scheme can be carried out in sections at a *pro rata* cost, and they are now reporting upon the erection of one-half only, which would be sufficient to do all our present trade of the Ducie Road and Dean Street Bakeries, and give accommodation for the increase in our trade for several years.

Your Committee have also given their earnest attention to the possibility of utilising the present Ducie Road site. This, as we have already intimated, means a duplicate building of the present bakery, with all its consequent disadvantages of working and management, and the impossibility of further extension, and the erection at Whitehall or elsewhere of stabling for the whole of the Society's horses and vehicles.

We append an estimate showing the capital cost of the two schemes:—

COST OF PROPOSED BUILDINGS.

SCHEME *A*—WHITEHALL—	£
Erection of Buildings for 15 Ovens	15607
Machinery	2961
Stables, 22 horses, 3 boxes	2800
Land for Stables (estimate)	250
	21618

SCHEME *B*—DUCIE ROAD—	£
8 Ovens	8169
Machinery	2786
Stables, 60 horses and boxes	6396
	17351

Sack Loft, 2,353, Whitehall; Ducie Road Bakery, 1,515; Extension about same.

DETAILS OF MACHINERY—	£ Whitehall.		£ Ducie Road.
1 Dough Divider	300	.....	300
1 Moulding Machine	275	2 machines.	550
6 Drawplate Ovens	1438	.....	1438
6 Drawplate Ovens removed and rebuilt	450	.....	—
1 Kneader	178	.....	178
1 Spiral Brush	26	.....	26
1 Temperating Tank	22	.....	22
2 Blenders and Weighers	180	.....	180
1 Independent Hot Water Supply	47	.....	47
1 Canvas Shute	5	.....	5
Labour, Fixing (estimated)	40	.....	40
	2961	.....	2786

Great attention has been given to economy of working and the possibility of adopting a more efficient method of heating the ovens.

During the visit of inspection to the Plymouth Bakery, the Sub-Committee were impressed with the cleanliness and control of the gas-fired ovens as against those which are coke fired, but further information shows that there is a higher capital charge on the gas-fired ovens and no economy in the cost of production. We, therefore, recommend in either case the adoption of coke-fired ovens.

The machinery for the production of the loaf has undergone great improvements, but such improvements can be introduced into either scheme without material difference in the first cost. But we would point out that in the Whitehall scheme all the machinery and process necessary for making the bread are under one roof, controlled by one staff of men, while at Ducie Road they would be in two separate buildings, necessitating additional staff and motive power, &c., in addition to the lack of efficient control by the Manager, and the greater trouble and cost of the delivery department.

We would also point out that as all the stabling accommodation would necessarily be away from the bakery in Ducie Road, this would entail loss of time in getting to and fro with the horses and vehicles.

The further question of dealing with the present properties, if it should be decided to vacate the Ducie Road Bakery, was next dealt with. After interviewing the Managers of the various departments, your Committee are convinced that such rearrangements can be made as will fully utilise these premises in extending existing departments and the introduction of new features. Your Committee, therefore, propose the following recommendations:—

1. That a building be erected on the ground at Whitehall sufficient to contain fifteen ovens, with room to extend up to thirty ovens, and with the necessary flour loft, bread making, cooling, and delivery rooms.

2. To erect six new (Werner, Pfleiderer) Drawplate Ovens.

3. To remove and re-erect the six ovens at present at Ducie Road Bakery.

4. To purchase and fix the machinery stated in the report.

5. To erect on land adjoining the bakery accommodation for twenty-two horses and three hospital boxes.

6. To remove the Bread-making Department at Dean Street to the new bakery, and use the Dean Street Bakery wholly as a Confectionery Department, with a Manager directly responsible to the Committee.

7. The Grocery Transfer and Sundries Packing Departments to be removed to the Ducie Road premises.

8. The creation of the following new departments at these buildings, Ducie Road: Cold store accommodation for butter, eggs, bacon, lard, &c.; washing and smoking of bacon; the blending and crushing of grain; greater and more sanitary accommodation for the Sundries Packing Department, and the packing of a much larger number of sundries than at present dealt with.

9. The use of the present Packing Department as a Boot Transfer Department (greatly needed), and to facilitate the work generally of the Central premises.

Your Committee believe that with the increased membership of the Society, and the consequent increase of trade, the profitable utilisation of the present bakery premises as suggested, the introduction of machinery, and other forms of economy in purchasing, production, and distribution, the capital expenditure will be amply justified.

A. The following figures under *A* Scheme show the new and additional expenses to be created by the proposed bakery at Whitehall.

	£
BUILDINGS for 15 Ovens	15607
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Poor and District Rates, Income Taxes, Water Accounts, Interest, and Depreciation on Outlay	365
MACHINERY	2961
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Interest and Depreciation on Outlay	103
STABLE BUILDINGS—	
22 horses and 3 boxes £2800	
Land for ditto 250	
——	3050
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Poor and District Rates, Income Taxes, Water Accounts, Interest, and Depreciation on Outlay	78

B. The following figures under *B* Scheme show the new and additional expenses to be created by extensions to the present bakery at Ducie Road.

	£
BUILDINGS for 8 Ovens	8169
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Poor and District Rates, Income Taxes, Water Accounts, Interest, and Depreciation on Outlay	189
MACHINERY	2786
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Interest and Depreciation on Outlay	99
STABLE BUILDINGS—	
60 horses and boxes	6396
Estimate of cost given by Secretary covering Poor and District Rates, Income Taxes, Water Accounts, Interest, and Depreciation on Outlay	153

C STATEMENT.

The following set of expenses are those already existing on the present bakery premises in Ducie Road, which, in the adoption of the Whitehall *A* Scheme, would transfer thereto the depreciation and interest on machinery marked O; but, in case of the adoption of the *B* Scheme, then the total of under-mentioned expenses would require to be added in order to compare the final aggregate totals of the two schemes, *A* and *B*.

	£	s.	d.
Rates, Income Taxes, Gas Accounts, Water, and Electric Light	56	14	0
Interest and Depreciation on Buildings	63	10	1
O. Interest and Depreciation on Machinery	51	5	6
	171	9	7

A SCHEME—	£
Estimated Cost brought down	547
Transfer from Statement *C*—Machinery Expenses	51
Grand Total for comparison	598

B SCHEME—	£
Estimated Cost brought down	441
Transfer from Statement *C*—Total Expenses	171
Grand Total for comparison	612

The only reason we have not debited *A* Scheme with the cost of present Ducie Road Bakery expenses, £120, is solely on the assumption that such building will be taken over by another department for the purpose of new revenue to the Society; otherwise such an item stands chargeable to Bakery Scheme *A*.

Electric and gas power used in production forms a trade account charge, and, therefore, is not due to appear here; nevertheless, we should like to have computed same, as also electric lighting, but, having no data or knowledge of capacity or demand, are unable to do so.

Yours, on behalf of the General Committee,

JOS. MARKS, President.
T. H. SMITH, Secretary.

The Committee lost no time in getting to work; the Sub-Committee for considering the question of bakery extension was added to the Building Committee, and this joint body was made responsible for the operations at Whitehall.

Meanwhile, enthusiasm was kindled among the educational bodies, and the St. George's Road District Council promptly suggested that a demonstration should be made

at the stone-laying. This was agreed to, and, on June 27th, 1908, this ceremony, unique in the annals of Bristol Co-operation, was performed by Mr. Joseph Marks (President) in the presence of thousands of his fellow Co-operators.

The actual stone-laying was preceded by a procession of vehicles, tastefully set out as tableaux, arranged by the members of the educational bodies and Women's Guilds, prizes being awarded for the best exhibits. The gay cavalcade assembled in Queen Square, and, accompanied by bands, proceeded, by an extended route, to the bakery site.

This monster parade, starting from Queen Square at 3-30 p.m., proceeded to Whitehall, through Queen Charlotte Street, Baldwin Street, Bridge Street, Dolphin Street, Peter Street, Castle Street, Old Market Street, West Street, Clarence Road, Lawrence Hill, Church Road, Lyppiat Road, and Whitehall Road.

The order of procession was as follows: Imperial Prize Band; brake, Management Committee; tableau, "Britannia," Avonmouth Council; brake, Bishopston Council and Guild; tableau, "Trade," C.W.S.; brake, Cotham Council; tableau, "Justice, &c.," Bishopston Council; brake, Central Guild; tableau, "Trade," Boots and Saddlery; brake, Greenbank Council; tableau, "Trade," Clothing Department; brake, Kingsland Road Council and Guild; furniture van, Coal Department; brake, Kingswood Council and Guild; tableau, "Trade," C.W.S.; brake, Lawrence Hill Council; tableau, "Trade," Furnishing Department; Kingswood Evangel Band; trap, Building, Drapery, and Coal Managers; tableau, "Sowing and Reaping," Lawrence Hill Council; tableau, "Model of New Bakery," Building Department; tableau, "Trade," Bakery Department; trap, Bakery Managers; tableau, "Trade," Grocery Department; trap, General and Assistant Grocery Managers; tableau, "Trade," C.W.S.; brake, East Street and Raleigh Road Councils; tableau, *Our Circle*, East Street and Raleigh Road Councils; brake, East Street and Raleigh Road Councils; furniture van, Coal Department; brake,



WHITEHALL BAKERY.



WHITEHALL BAKERY: OVENS.

Redfield Council; tableau, "Co-operation: the Hope of the Future," St. Paul's Council; brake, St. Paul's Council; brake, St. George's Road Council; tableau, "Piracy, Old and New," Wells Road Council; brake, Shirehampton Council; Temperance Prize Band; brake, Totterdown Council; furniture van, Coal Department.

The direction of the subsequent proceedings was in the hands of Mr. W. J. Petherick, who presented Mr. Joseph Marks with a silver trowel and mallet in honour of the occasion. Beneath the stone was deposited a set of the Society's checks.

After Mr. Marks had declared the stone "well and truly laid" addresses were given by Mr. H. J. A. Wilkins (Plymouth) and Mr. J. E. Johns (Reading), Directors of the C.W.S., both of whom had had experience of extensive bakery developments in connection with their own Societies.

The work was rapidly pushed forward; none but *bona-fide* trade unionists were employed, preference being given to members of the Co-operative Society. The erection and equipment of the whole structure took just twenty months, and, on March 10th, 1910, by invitation, some 500 attended the formal opening, Messrs. Marks, Petherick, and Wilkins again officiating as principals in the opening ceremony.

The chief features of the enterprise were set forth in a little booklet, from which the following particulars have been extracted:—

The new machine bakery and stabling is situate in Chester Road, being approached from Whitehall Road on the one side and from St. George's Park on the other. The site covers 5,813 square yards, in a most commanding position, the turret-topped bakery completely overlooking its surroundings, and standing out clearly as a landmark for miles around. The building, which lays no claim to any particular order of architecture, of modern type and substantial character, is built of best red-faced bricks, relieved with terra-cotta mouldings, and is fitted with a complete installation of electric light and power.

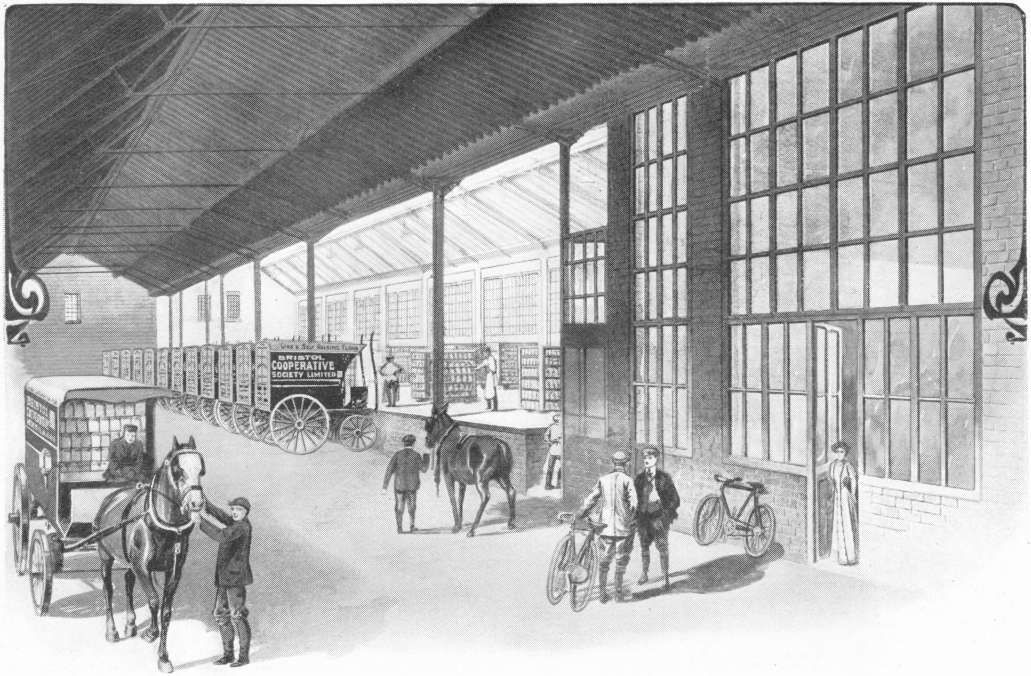
The main entrance is in Chester Road, adjoining which is a spacious cooling-room, 132 feet long and 32 feet wide, having alongside, at a level 3 feet lower, a loading avenue, 20 feet wide, giving capacity for the loading of fifteen vans at a time. At the end of the platform is the general office, with accommodation for sixteen clerks. The bakehouse itself is 154 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 17 feet high, ideally hygienic both for the employé and the production of bread. Here are twelve drawplate ovens (with space for four more),* two Lewis Pointon dough dividers, one flexible moulder, and a 50-horse power motor. The whole of the interior is faced with white enamelled bricks. At the rear of the ovens there is ample space for firing purposes. Near the coke bunkers is the engine-room, with a 40-horse power gas engine by Crossley Brothers, as a reserve.

On the first floor is the machinery dealing with the process of dough-making, for which there are two two-sack Universal Kneading Machines; also sponge-room, men's dining-room, bathroom, and lavatory arrangements. The floor above has a storage capacity for nearly 5,000 sacks of flour. A flour sifter and sack cleaner is in use on this floor, also a hoist for lifting flour from the hauling-way below. There is an emergency iron staircase from the first and second floors, communicating direct with the yard.

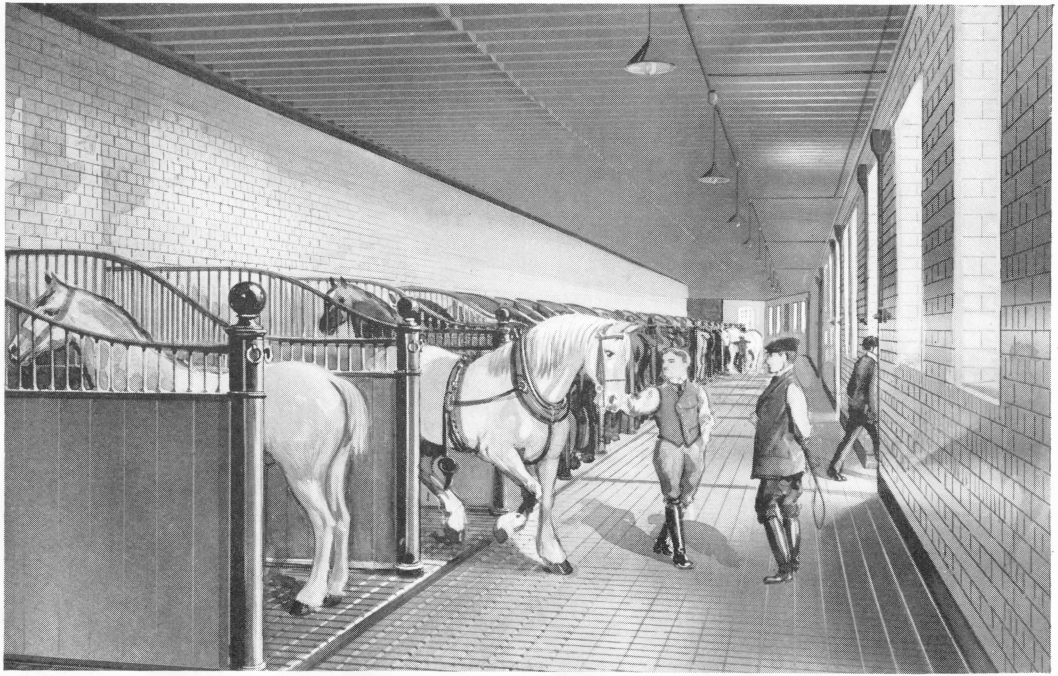
On the topmost storey there is a water tower fitted with tank containing 25,000 gallons of water, for a reserve supply.

The stabling accommodation, which has been designed and carried out on the latest principles, includes a fine range of stalls for thirty horses. The walls are faced with golden-tinted enamelled bricks, with hospital, loose boxes, harness and lamp rooms, also dining-room, office, and complete lavatory arrangements for the staff of the stable department. There is also a hauling-way, with entrance from Howard Road, extending through to Chester Road. This provides complete cover for vans and horses between bakery and stables.

* Trade has so considerably increased that these four ovens have since been added.



WHITEHALL BAKERY: COOLING-ROOM AND DELIVERY SHED.



INTERIOR OF STABLES, WHITEHALL.

The whole of the work was carried out by the Society's Building Department, supervised by Mr. W. Ashley, who was assisted by his father, Mr. W. Ashley, senior.

That the provision of increased accommodation for baking came none too soon is evident from an analysis of trade statistics for the year 1909—

Members.	General Sales.	Bread Produced.		
		Sacks.	Quarterns.	Value.
15500	£ 262083	27456	2553491	£ 66995

Comparing these figures with those for 1904, when the four Societies were catering for their respective areas, it will be seen that, whereas an astonishing increase had taken place generally, the bakery increase had been abnormally great, and this, too, under admittedly congested conditions in respect both to production and delivery.

It is extremely gratifying to find in the records of all the Societies a strong determination to produce nothing but the best loaf. Suggestions have been made from time to time that a lower grade should also be introduced to compete with the low-price bakers, but this course has always been sternly resisted both by Committees and members. In no case has the price of bread been permitted to exceed that of bakers producing an equal quality; but occasionally it has been lower, not with any desire to compete unfairly, but because Co-operators prefer to manage their business for themselves in their own way. When, therefore, in their judgment, the wheat and flour markets have been temporarily rigged for speculative purposes, or even when advances seem justified, but the stock of flour held by the Society is large, it has been the practice to maintain the lower level of price for the longest possible period.

When the operations of Co-operators were on a smaller scale some hesitation was displayed in the pursuance of this policy. Possible combinations of bakers, or of

millers and bakers, might have imperilled the position of the Society both as regards the purchase of flour and the sale of bread. No such hesitation is shown to-day. The largest and best equipped bakery in Bristol has nothing to fear from any possible combination of bakers; and Co-operators, through the C.W.S., being the largest millers in the country, are capable of supplying themselves with all the flour they require. These facts are, without doubt, unpalatable to bakers and millers who work in combination to protect their own interests as producers. Co-operators, as an association of consumers, protect theirs, and in doing so confer a benefit on the whole body of consumers, whether Co-operators or not; for no combination of producers can permanently effect an advance in price whilst a considerable source of supply refuses to recognise the combine.

Many attempts have been made during later periods to persuade the Committees of Bristol Societies to fall in line with the trade in this respect. One instance must suffice, but it is fully convincing. In January, 1902, a letter was received by the Bristol and District Committee from the Bristol Master Bakers' Association, asking what would be the attitude of the Society should an advance of ½d. per 4lb. loaf be declared. A reply was sent to the effect that, as the Society was not a member of the association, " the Committee failed to see what effect the action of the association would have upon them."

Returning to the question in April, the Bakers and Millers' Association informed the Committee that they contemplated putting up the price of bread. Would the Society do the same? No reply was vouchsafed to this query, but a resolution was promptly passed that no action should be taken in conjunction with any association.

It is a striking testimony to the appreciation in which Co-operation is held, and also of its intrinsic worth to the community, that probably the two best equipped bakeries in the West of England, both as regards economy and efficiency, have been established by Co-operators in Plymouth and in Bristol. Such facts must outweigh all the specious pleadings of individualists.

CHAPTER III.

Co-operative Education.

THE Rochdale Pioneers were impressed with the necessity for education among the workers, and set aside 2½ per cent of their net profits for this purpose. In their day it is more than probable that this education was of a type now given in our public elementary schools. The Education Act of 1870 relieved Co-operators from responsibility for such education; but it has come to be recognised that there is still educational work for Co-operators to do, in order to develop Co-operative character and make good, intelligent citizens.

The Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852 permitted, in one of its clauses, the use of Societies' funds for educational purposes; but from some oversight a subsequent Act in 1855 made no such provision. Hence in all probability this necessity was lost sight of by the Co-operators in Bristol from 1860 to 1874, for education was not mentioned in the rules of those early Societies. This may have had something to do with their downfall. The power was restored in 1862, and from the inauguration of Congresses in 1869 this question of education has been a burning one with Co-operative enthusiasts.

Having accepted the Model Rules of the Co-operative Union, all the modern Bristol Societies have set aside 2½ per cent of their net profits for educational purposes. "Education" is a term which may be variously interpreted. Thus it is not surprising to find that these funds have been utilised for a variety of purposes, all of which may be summed up by the term "Co-operative propaganda."

Of serious study there has been but little, and the absence of outstanding personalities among Bristol Co-operators,

in wider spheres of human affairs, may perhaps be due to that cause. But, accepting Ruskin's estimation for the moment that "we learn in order to live," in this sense a great educational work has been continually going on, the effects of which are to be seen in the particular attitude adopted in recent years by the Society towards improved standards in connection with their business affairs, and humanitarian sympathies in social matters. It may be that these influences have exerted themselves on but a minority of the whole membership as yet; but these are as "the leaven which leaveneth the lump." They find their power for expression in the Educational Department; for what the soul is to the man this department is to the movement, and the Co-operative conscience is developed therein. Both at Avonmouth and Keynsham the necessity for this development of the Co-operative conscience was not sufficiently recognised, and even Bedminster and Bristol and District Societies had their periods of sleepy indifference. But the Bristol Society started with a wealth of valuable experience upon which to rely, coupled with an enthusiasm which, wisely directed, may be expected to carry Co-operation a long way towards its ideal.

Bedminster and Bristol and District in their early days had the unique advantage of enrolling among their members some keen educationalists. The first Secretary of the Evening Class movement in Bristol was Mr. J. W. H. Wall, also first Secretary of the Bristol and District Society. Associated with him in this work were Canon Percival (now Bishop of Hereford) and the late Mr. T. Gilmore Barnett. Both of these gentlemen inspired the early Bristol Co-operators to good works, Mr. Barnett being a member of both Societies. Soon after the start Mr. Vaughan Nash joined the Bristol and District Society, and became an active member. He it was who suggested the election of an Educational Committee, with powers to add to their number, in 1886; another valuable suggestion from the same quarter urged that Bedminster should be invited to co-operate in the preparation of a winter programme. Thus was Mr. J. F. Hopkins

brought into the work, and, in this manner, the two Societies were first linked up, a policy which was finally consummated nineteen years later in the amalgamation. A Choral Society was suggested, but the idea lapsed for a period. The Educational Committee aimed at interesting working people in what has come to be called "higher education." During the winter of 1886 a course of lectures on "Co-operation and Capitalism" were delivered at the Athenæum, known in later years as the University College. These lectures were made known to the workers through the Co-operative Educational Committee. Through their efforts, too, the Higher Education Committee was permitted the free use of a room over the Lawrence Hill Stores in 1889. Much quiet, plodding work was done, Mr. Nash being steadily persistent; it is recorded that he called for the re-formation of the Joint Committee in 1889 upon the same lines as in 1886. Then the Bristol and District fell upon evil days, and, except for the formation of Women's Guilds, the Educational Department lapsed in that Society.

Not so in Bedminster, however. The Management Committee took it upon themselves to make the spending of educational funds part of their duties, and, for many years, the organisation of the work was under their supervision and control. With an eye to trade returns, quite naturally they leaned towards methods which seemed to promise extensions in that direction, although they gave their support to real educational schemes promoted by outside bodies.

One of the outstanding features of their work was in connection with the annual Co-operative Festival, held at the Crystal Palace, starting in 1888. For many years, in conjunction with other Societies in the district, an excursion was arranged and members encouraged to take part in the Home Industries Exhibition and Flower Show. A choir, 120 strong, was organised under the leadership of Mr. E. T. Morgan, of Bristol Cathedral Choir. This competed with other Co-operative Choirs at the festival, gaining second prize in 1899.

Generally, however, propaganda of Co-operative trading ideals was aimed at—public meetings and socials, calculated to bring trade and membership to the Society; and such efforts were more popularly supported than lectures and rambles of more educational importance.

Before the advent of a District Association the educational funds at Bedminster provided the sinews of war for carrying on propaganda work in Somerset and Gloucestershire. Partly owing to their efforts, the Society at Avonmouth was brought into existence; and other now flourishing Societies at Yeovil and Warminster owe something to the sacrificing efforts of Bedminster Co-operators.

Grants were made to the Women's Guild, and a very good choir was maintained for several years, forming a valuable contingent to the larger body performing at the annual Co-operative Festival, Crystal Palace.

Children's sports and festivals were also arranged by the Educational Department, and delegates' expenses to Conferences and subscriptions to the Co-operative Union and the District Association were provided out of the educational fund.

In 1897–8 a movement was set on foot by the more ardent educationalists to place the work in the hands of a Committee elected *ad hoc*. This desire found expression in the rules passed in 1898.

Meanwhile a start had been made to deal with the education of the children. An essay competition was organised in 1897, and in 1898 an examination in Co-operation was held, the questions being based upon the chapters on "Co-operation" from Mr. Arnold Forster's book, "The Laws of Everyday Life." Nine children entered, and eight were commended for their excellence of work, the first three, William H. Tozer, Robert G. Pope, and Edward W. Tanner, being specially mentioned.

The year following, an essay competition was arranged for employés, the subject being: "What I Think of Co-operation." The prizes were taken by Messrs. H. F. Cross, H. Pierce, and W. T. Morse in the order named.

This year also saw the definite linking up of educational work with the Co-operative Union. A Children's Class, taught by Mr. S. C. Pope, was held under its auspices; and, at the examination, Bedminster students attained a high position on the list of competitors for the kingdom. Mr. Pope also submitted himself for examination in the Adult Section, and obtained first place in the second class of the advanced stage upon "The History and Principles of the Co-operative Movement."

The Children's Class has been maintained ever since. In 1900, the last year of Mr. Pope's teachership, Edith Poole obtained second prize for the United Kingdom, with a really excellent paper, and Mr. Pope was made the recipient of a dressing case from the Educational Committee as a token of their appreciation of his efforts in this work.

In course of time a class was also organised at Totterdown, and for the next few years, under either Mr. S. C. Pope or Mr. C. A. Poole at Bedminster, and Mr. W. Treble at Totterdown (the last-named having been one of Mr. Pope's successful students), boys and girls continued to receive instruction upon Co-operative principles and history.

Amongst other activities of the Educational Committee must be mentioned the starting of a Discussion Class and a Swimming Class for members' children, a Dancing Class, and the formation of an Economics Library.

In 1903 the choir was revived under the leadership of Mr. Leslie; and, although not associating itself with the Crystal Palace Festival, it did some good work locally.

The crisis which occurred in 1899 in connection with the Society's trading affairs led to some weakening of educational enthusiasm, and propaganda of a more practical type was felt to be a necessity. Committees attached to each Branch were brought into existence, known as Local Committees, who, acting with the General Committee and the Educational Committee, were expected to rouse local enthusiasm for Co-operative trading. This broadening of the basis did not work

altogether smoothly; decreased profits also meant decreased educational grants, and sectional interests sometimes outweighed the interests of the Society as a whole.

From August, 1896, the Society issued a well-edited local "Wheatsheaf," for nearly two years conducted by Mr. J. T. Hopkins, then by Mr. C. A. Poole, as Secretary of the Educational Committee, upon whose retirement in December, 1900, the work fell to the lot of Mr. A. Lloyd, in whose hands the responsibility rested until amalgamation.

In the Bristol and District Society, with the exception of the first few years already referred to and a spurt from 1903 to 1905, the educational funds have been utilised purely for propaganda purposes. New members and more trade have been the main objects, and the system which was evolved adapted itself admirably for the purpose.

It was during the winter of 1892, when the general outlook of the Society was anything but bright, and when the Educational Committee was all but defunct, partly, it must be admitted, through lack of funds, that a brilliant idea was conceived of establishing Committees in connection with each Branch to work up socials, tea meetings, and such like; small sums were granted from the general funds to meet expenses, and the Women's Guilds lent their aid to the scheme. In February, 1893, these Committees had so far justified their existence that they were empowered to spend further sums of money—Lawrence Hill and Deanery Road £2 each, and Newfoundland Road £1. These Committees were very energetic during that year, which was the Congress year, and, in March, 1894, a joint conference was held with a view to establishing the system upon a settled basis. No decision was arrived at, but it was left for Mr. Newton Smith (the Society's Manager) to think out a scheme and prepare a paper. This paper was read at a Conference held on April 4th, 1894. Mr. Smith advocated what he called "Educational and Propaganda District Councils" in connection with each Store district, having a twofold object: (*a*) To arouse

the existing workers' enthusiasm in the Society's forward movement, and (*b*) To carry on an active propaganda with a view to increasing the membership in the vicinity of each Store.

The idea caught on, for the need of both ideals was very pressing. At the following quarterly business meeting the Educational Committee was directed to work with the Social Committees—"District Councils," as they now came to be known—and the Educational Secretary's action in defraying a small balance due to Newfoundland Road Council was confirmed. Meanwhile the £5 grant was still made to the Councils from the general funds, and treated as a trade expense.

That definitely educational work was not encouraged at this time is apparent from the fact that an invitation from the Trades Council in November, 1895, to co-operate in arranging some lectures on "Nineteenth Century Political History" was ignored, and a couple of years later, when invited to amalgamate with the C.W.S. employés in an Adult Class on "The History and Principles of the Co-operative Movement," a reply was sent that the time could not be spared for this study.

The Councils did valuable propaganda work in connection with the opening of Bishopston and Greenbank Branches, distributing literature and generally rousing the locality. A Council was set up at each of these Branches immediately they were opened, for the ideal was still a District Council for each Branch. Staple Hill followed, the Council being actually formed before the Branch was established, and, by their own propaganda, helped to justify the opening of the Branch.

Meanwhile a constitution had been set down for the systematic government and general direction of the Councils. This was inaugurated at the June Quarterly Meeting of 1895. The Educational Committee was dissolved, and its funds and functions handed over to a Finance Committee elected in equal proportion from each District Council and the General Committee. As there

were but three District Councils at the time, with a representation of two from each body, this meant a Committee of eight.

The duties of this Committee were laid down by resolution as follows: (1) To allot the educational grant to the districts each quarter, not necessarily into equal parts, but giving consideration to the immediate pressing wants of any particular district, and making provision accordingly; (2) Within a week after the close of each quarter a statement of expenditure to be obtained from the Secretaries of the District Councils, with vouchers duly initialled by the Chairman and Secretary of the Council, in order that a balance sheet of the whole might be sent to the General Secretary for inclusion in the Society's balance sheet.

The resolution also provided that the Chairman of this Committee be one of the members representing the General Committee, that each Council should have full control over the expenditure of the sum allotted to it, and that the name of the Committee be "The Educational Finance Committee."

It is important to notice that these provisions included (1) A large measure of control by the General Committee of Management in the allocation of grants; (2) Home rule in respect to spending powers to the districts. Under such arrangements, it is scarcely to be wondered at that particular emphasis was placed upon extensions in trade rather than the spread of knowledge.

At a joint conference of the General Committee and the District Councils held on May 2nd, 1896, two papers were read. No. 1, entitled, "How best to Open a Store in a Populous District without Interfering with existing Stores," was contributed by the Manager (Mr. Newton Smith), and No. 2, "Elementary Working of Societies, having reference to Answering Questions put by New Members," by Mr. John Brown (the old Educational Secretary), the latter, it is true, implying a certain measure of education, but of a casual sort, and subordinated to the consideration of extending trade.

For a few quarters the grants made to the districts were of unequal amounts, and were duly recorded on the Society's official minutes; but the Quarterly Meeting held in June, 1896, decided that in future the District Councils should elect the Finance Committee, and official connection with the General Committee of Management ceased, although its influence continued to prevail through those of their number who secured election from the District Councils.

As new Branches were opened at Redfield and Kingsdown, the members in those districts were permitted to form Councils; and, by means of socials and concerts, much propaganda ensued, leading ultimately to further Branch development.

In 1902 a change was made in the methods of governing the Educational Department. As the result of deliberations by a Special Committee drawn from the Councils the following rules were laid down:—

1. With the consent of the Quarterly Meeting of the educational bodies, the members in any district or districts may form themselves into a District Educational Council with power to make bye-laws (that are not contrary to these rules) to govern their conduct. No person shall be eligible for membership who is not a shareholder in the Society.

1A. They may undertake such work as the arrangement of Adult and Children's Classes, and Children's Outings, Public Meetings, Lectures, Concerts, and anything calculated to directly further the educational work or trading interest of the Society.

2. Each District Educational Council shall elect a Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer at their first meeting following the Annual Meeting of educational bodies. One delegate shall also be elected each half year to serve on the Educational Finance Committee for a period of twelve months.

3. The Treasurer and Secretary of each District Council and Women's Guild Branch shall prepare a report and balance sheet for adoption at their Annual Meeting. The balance sheet to be signed by two Auditors, and afterwards sent to the Secretary of the Educational Department for publication.

4. The District Educational Councils and Women's Guild Branches shall meet together quarterly, at such places as they may from time to time determine. The Annual Meeting to be held in May, when the officers of the Educational Finance Committee, consisting of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be elected by ballot, and the Secretary's remuneration fixed.

Admission to such meetings to be by card, which will only be issued to members of the Society who are also members of a Council or approved Guild Branch.

5. These meetings may instruct the Educational Finance Committee to carry out any work, apportioning such sums of money as may be deemed necessary for this purpose; shall discuss any resolution of which four weeks' notice has been given, and receive delegates' reports.

6. An Agenda shall be sent to each District Educational Council and Women's Guild Branch at least three weeks previous to each Quarterly Educational Meeting.

7. Any District Educational Council may, on the recommendation of the Educational Finance Committee, be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of the Annual Meeting.

8. The Educational Finance Committee shall consist of the officers (named in Rule 4), two delegates from each District Educational Council, and four delegates from the Women's Guild Branches. One-third of the Committee to form a quorum.

9. The duties of the Educational Finance Committee shall be to carry out the work delegated to them by the Quarterly Educational Meetings, or sanctioned by a majority of the educational bodies, and to allocate the educational grant as follows: After deducting secretarial and other expenses, shall divide equally the remainder amongst the educational bodies, the whole of the Women's Guild Branches to be reckoned as two District Councils. They shall have power to deal with any infringement or alleged infringement of these rules, and their ruling upon any point in dispute shall be binding upon the persons concerned, pending the decision of the educational bodies. A financial statement of the educational grant shall be made at each of their Quarterly Meetings.

10. No alteration in, or addition to these rules, shall be made, except at the annual meeting of the educational bodies, six weeks' notice of which must be given in writing to the Secretary of the Educational Department, such alteration to be confirmed by the Quarterly Business Meeting of the Society.

At this date there were existing eight Councils and two branches of the Women's Guild, viz., St. Paul's, Lawrence Hill, St. George's Road, Greenbank, Staple Hill, Bishopston, Redfield, and Kingsdown Councils; Bishopston, and the Central branches of the Women's Guild. The latter, being an amalgamation of three other branches, was permitted to utilise three-fourths of the Guild apportionment.

It will be noticed that by this new constitution the Women's Guild Branches were officially recognised as part

of the Society's Educational Department; further, that the Finance Committee was deprived of administrative functions, this power being vested in the Quarterly and Annual Meetings of Councils.

The Finance Committee thus came to occupy about the same position as would an individual Secretary, advising and acting only under instructions, but, in no sense, permitted to initiate. There was probably good reason for this. The Finance Committee had neglected its opportunities, and, as a result, its utility for service was questioned. For instance, in 1900 it had been decided that for current expenses the Finance Committee should be allowed to retain 5 per cent of the educational grant, but according to the new constitution the deduction thus made, whether more or less than 5 per cent, was to be confined to secretarial expenses, obviously intended as a limitation of power, if not of finance. From this it is not unreasonable to assume that the amounts realised by the 5 per cent deductions had not been dealt with in a manner which met the approval of the Councils; and seeing that, with the exception of a Co-operative Choir under the direction of Mr. Fidkin, no work of a specifically centralised nature had been carried on, it is not surprising that the Councils were dissatisfied.

In 1903 it was found necessary to amend the rules, and some important additions were made to the constitution laid down the year previously. These rules significantly spoke of Educational bodies rather than District Councils. No person was considered eligible for membership of an educational body who was not a member of the Society. This was aimed at one of the Councils which had been admitting members' wives and husbands to their Council meetings. Another addition provided that Women's Guild Branches should be admitted to the Quarterly and Annual Meetings, and they should have four, instead of two, representatives on the Finance Committee. It was further laid down that, after deducting secretarial *and other expenses*, the Finance Committee should divide the educational grant equally

amongst the educational bodies and Women's Guild Branches, the whole of the Guild Branches being reckoned as two Councils. They (the Finance Committee) should have power to deal with any infringement of the rules, and, pending the decision of the whole of the educational bodies, their ruling should be binding upon each and every one. These rules were printed on cards, and handed by Council and Guild Secretaries to their members. The possession of one of these cards constituted a member's right to take part in the work of this department.

"What's in a name?" is sometimes asked. Well, much in respect to this matter. The alteration of the title of "District Councils" to "Educational bodies," probably to accommodate the Women's Guild Branches, was significant of much. Just prior to, and upon the acceptance of these rules, there seems to have been considerably more concentration upon the educational policy of the Society as a whole, and occasionally there was some chafing by the Councils on account of this restriction of power. Considerable latitude was exercised under the clause permitting deductions for secretarial *and other expenses*, which increased from £17. 6s. in March, 1904, when the cost of the "Wheatsheaf Record" was first sustained by the educational funds, to nearly £37 in May, 1905. Much of this was occasioned by printing and stationery, consequent upon referring matters for discussion to the Councils. The cost of "Wheatsheafs," too, was an increasing item; but the chief cause of this depletion was the loss incurred on the Festival and subscriptions to the Labour Fête.

These meetings, which have now become annual events, were promoted first in 1901 by the Trades Council and Co-operators acting in concert, Co-operators becoming mainly responsible for the Festival, and Trade unionists for the Fête. It is with the former we are mostly concerned. The Festival has been held each February since, and has taken the form of a high-class concert interspersed with speeches, followed by games and dancing. The

occasion has been made one for a grand reunion of Co-operators and representatives of labour movements, and, generally, the speeches have tended towards wider spheres of labour activity than the merely co-operative or local; but usually the Chairman has been a prominent Co-operator, and has used the opportunity to develop the Co-operative theme. These meetings have been largely advertised and well attended, the largest hall in Bristol, the Colston Hall, being required to accommodate the audience. The responsibility and management of the function has been borne by representative Co-operators from Bedminster, Bristol and District, and the Beehive Societies, with assistance from the Trades Council.

LIST OF CHAIRMEN AND SPEAKERS.

No.	Year.	Chairman.	Speakers.
1.	1901	Mr. W. H. Brown, J.P..	Messrs. H. Vivian and Geo. Hawkins, J.P.
2.	1902	Mr. Geo. Hawkins, J.P.	Countess of Warwick.
3.	1904	Mr. W. H. Brown, J.P...	Mr. W. Crooks, M.P.
4.	1905	Mr. Isaac Mort	Mr R. Bell, M.P.
5.	1905	Mr. Adam Deans	Mr. J Keir Hardie, M.P.
6.	1906	Mr. W. R. Oxley.....	Mr. J. R. Macdonald, M.P.
7.	1908	Mr. Joseph Marks	Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P.
8.	1909	Mr. Joseph Marks	Mr. W. Crooks, M.P.
9.	1910	Mr. Joseph Marks	Rev. Ben. F. Wilson (California, U.S.A.).

The drain upon the educational fund by the undertakings mentioned above, notwithstanding that the gross amount of the grant increased with the growth of the Society, left less and less for division among the Councils and Guild Branches. In consequence, the extension of Councils was not favoured. Some little difficulty arose when the Greenbank Branch of the Women's Guild started in May, 1903, as to whether the body should be recognised financially, and it was decided that the grant to the Guilds as a whole should not be increased. The matter was settled by Bishopston and the Central branches each foregoing a portion, that Greenbank might have one-fifth of the whole.

The opening of Ashley Road, Kingswood, Fishponds, Clouds Hill, and Downend Road Branches saw no more Councils established, although at Fishponds, Clouds Hill, and Kingswood suggestions were put forward in respect thereto. Upon the amalgamation of Shirehampton and Avonmouth it could not be claimed, as it was in the case of other districts, that existing Councils might cover the ground, and accordingly a Council was formed for Shirehampton.

Meanwhile a further disability was operating against the extension of Councils. Some of those most enthusiastic for intensive education had started children's and adult classes and lectures; and, although this was in the main accomplished by the help of voluntary teachers and lecturers, the expenses incidental to programmes and general advertising had completely run away with their portion of the grant, and the children's summer outing, always a feature with the Councils, suffered in consequence.

At Finance Meetings it was suggested that the expenses of administering the system could be minimised by co-ordination of effort. Councils did in some cases co-operate for class work and for children's outings, but the Finance Committee had no power to arrange these matters—they had to be mutually agreed upon by the bodies concerned.

As a help towards the encouragement of lectures, a lantern was procured and kept by the Finance Committee for the use of the educational bodies, and from 1904 onwards good use was made of this very excellent medium for conveying information both to adults and to children.

Among other methods adopted to popularise Co-operative thinking was a systematic distribution of Co-operative literature, and the *Co-operative News* was pressed upon members of Councils and others. In 1905 the proposal was brought forward that a history of the Society should be written and distributed; but, after being referred to the General Committee of Management, the matter was permitted to drop until after amalgamation proposals had been settled.

Meanwhile, in at least one of the Councils, a strong desire was manifesting itself that definitely educational work should be initiated by the Finance Committee. This Council (Bishopston, to wit) had experimented, and found that the support from their own district members was such as to warrant an extension of the work, and it accordingly proposed in July, 1905:—

1. That the Finance Committee be asked to arrange a series of lectures in Industrial History subjects in districts where Councils can be conveniently grouped.

2. That the Finance Committee be asked to issue a programme of prospective work for the coming winter to cover the whole Society, and that steps be taken immediately to procure particulars from the Councils and Women's Guild Branches in furtherance of this object.

After much discussion the matter was referred to the Quarterly Meeting of Councils, which met a month later, and which rejected the first proposal, leaving it to Councils to approach one another on the matter; and, with regard to the second proposal, it was suggested that those Councils and Guild Branches who could arrange details might forward them for insertion in the monthly "Wheatsheaf."

Meanwhile amalgamation had taken place, and it became evident that the whole system would have to be reviewed.



CHAPTER IV.

Co-operative Education—*(continued).*

UPON the amalgamation of the two Societies steps were taken to fuse the Educational Departments into a unified system. A Joint Meeting of Bristol and District Councils was convened, to which Bedminster Educational Committee was invited, and a discussion took place as to ways and means.

Eventually a Committee was formed to draw up a scheme for discussion at a subsequent meeting. The deliberations of this Committee revealed certain fundamental differences of opinion as to the methods which should be adopted for the furtherance of specific educational work, which led to the presentation of two reports, as set out herewith:—

No. 1 Report of Rules Revision Committee.

Exhaustive inquiries have been made into the effects of the schemes submitted with the desire to find some scheme which would not only be suitable to the present-day requirements, but may prove itself an effective weapon in the hands of those who are to follow in our footsteps in the future. With this object in view we recommend that the present system of District Councils be continued, and that they be thirteen in number, ten as at present on the Gloucester side and three on the Somerset side, and that no further increase in this number of District Councils be made for the present.

DISTRICT COUNCILS.

We recommend that the duties of the District Councils shall be to hold concerts, lectures, socials, children's outings, and classes for the study of the elementary principles of our movement, which should gradually develop into the study of the higher standard books published by the Co-operative Union. We believe this form of educational work is one of the most effective, as the knowledge gained by the children will not only be good to themselves but to those around them, and be a strong inducement to take an active interest not only in our Society but the movement generally.

CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE.

We recommend that the above title be adopted for the present Educational Finance Committee, who shall comprise one representative from each District Council, two from the branches of

the Women's Guild, three officers only, viz., Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary; the Treasurership to be abolished. All accounts relating to the Central Educational Committee to be passed by that Committee and sent to the General Secretary of the Society for payment, and that four members be elected from the Quarterly Business Meeting of the Society. Your Committee are not unanimous upon the last two points named, which, if agreed to, will make a Central Educational Committee of twenty-two members. Their powers shall be to arrange adult classes in such districts as they consider suitable, all costs in connection therewith to be borne by the Central fund; they shall also elect one of their number to represent them upon the Society's Choral Union, and give such financial aid to this body as they deem advisable; they shall also take the preliminary steps for the carrying out of such functions as the now well-established Annual Festival and Summer Outings.

Division of Educational Grant.—We recommend that, in order that the Central Educational Committee may effectively carry out their work, they shall retain one-third of the educational grant from the Society after deducting secretarial and other general expenses, the remaining portion to be divided amongst the Councils and Guilds.

WOMEN'S GUILDS.

As seen in the early part of this report, it is recommended that they have two representatives upon the Central Educational Committee on the same basis as two District Councils, and that they receive two Councils' grants, as their branches and membership have considerably increased since the amalgamation of the two Societies.

We hope that in recommending to you this scheme it will cause the minimum of disturbance to the present systems, and at the same time give your Central Educational Committee that power to deal with important matters requiring prompt attention and settlement, and we are hopeful that the good work done in the past will be continued with increased vigour, all working for the one great object of improving the knowledge of both the children and ourselves in the higher principles of our great movement.

No. 2 Report.

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE WORKING OF THE SOCIETY'S EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Funds.—The Society's grant from the profits for educational purposes for the present to be regarded as being half for propaganda and half for education.

PROPAGANDA.

Definition.—Propaganda shall be understood to include the arrangement of public meetings, concerts, children's outings, and anything calculated to directly forward the trading interests of the Society.

Method.—For propaganda purposes the total area at present covered by the Society's operations shall be divided into six districts, as follows:—

No. 1 District—Keynsham, Brislington, Totterdown, Raymend Road.
,, 2 ,, East Street, Raleigh Road, St. George's Road.
,, 3 ,, Avonmouth, Cotham, Bishopston, Ashley Down.
,, 4 ,, Ashley Hill, Newfoundland Road, Lawrence Hill, Redfield.
,, 5 ,, Greenbank, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Kingswood.
,, 6 ,, Women's Guild Branches.

Finance.—The grant for propagandist purposes to be divided equally between the districts.

Rents.—The rents of rooms let by the Society to be added to the total propagandist grant before division.

Detail.—Each Branch shop of the Society shall constitute the centre for propaganda.

Each Branch so constituted with twenty members and over shall be entitled to two members on the District Finance Committees.

The District Finance Committees shall have control of their respective funds, and be responsible for same to their Quarterly Meetings.

Quarterly Meetings shall be convened by the Finance Committee, notices of motion from the Branches to be handed in four weeks previously.

EDUCATIONAL.

Definition.—Education shall be understood to include the arrangement of classes, lectures, libraries, and anything calculated to advance the intellectual interests of the members.

Control.—The management of the department and control of the funds shall be invested in a Committee to be appointed as follows:—

One representative from each propagandist district, including one from Women's Guild	6
Two from the Annual Meeting of propaganda and educational bodies	2
Four from Society's Business Meeting	4
	12

Grants in Aid.—The Educational Committee shall have power to grant sums to those District Finance Committees and Women's Guild Branches who are willing to undertake work of a specific character.

Records.—These shall be provided for from the educational grant.

GENERAL.

The Annual Meeting of Propagandist Branches and the Educational Committees shall be held in May, at which a report



OFFICIALS EDUCATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE, 1909-10.

and statement of accounts, prepared by the Secretary of the Educational Department, shall be presented and be open for discussion.

It will be observed that both reports admitted the necessity for a Central Committee to organise educational work, and favoured the principle of District Councils for propaganda. But, whereas No. 1 regarded both objects from the same point of view with respect to the constitution of the Central Committee, No. 2 sought to discriminate the type of representatives selected to carry on the two branches of work.

Neither report was accepted by the members of the joint educational bodies; roughly, the old Bristol and District members inclined towards No. 1, and Bedminster towards No. 2; but, after considerable controversy and much acrimonious discussion, with slight modifications the Bristol and District system accepted in 1903 was put forward, and the Quarterly Business Meeting of the Society on June 27th, 1906, was asked to decide between two alternatives, set out in the following resolution and amendment:—

Resolution by Mr. Connolly:—

That, in accordance with Rules 127 and 128, this meeting sanctions the formation of Committees in the following districts: Lawrence Hill, St. Paul's, St. George's Road, Cotham, Bishopston, Greenbank, Staple Hill, Redfield, Kingswood, Shirehampton and Avonmouth, East Street, Raymend Road, and Totterdown. Such Committees to be known as District Educational Councils, and with the approved branches of the Women's Co-operative Guild shall carry on the educational and propaganda work of the Society. Further, a Finance Committee, consisting of representatives from each Council and the Women's Guild, shall be appointed, who shall be held responsible for the due application of the educational fund.

Amendment by Mr. E. Jackson:—

That in the eighth line the word " the " after " carry on " be deleted. The last clause to be deleted, and the following substituted: Further, a Committee of twelve shall be formed, six to be elected by the Quarterly Meeting of members and six by the Councils and Women's Guild Branches, and that this Committee shall be held responsible for the education fund in accordance with Rule 128.

These matters were discussed at some considerable length, and eventually the resolution was carried, the amendment being lost by a vote of 120 to 158.

Since this resolution was passed the number of Councils has considerably increased, and other Women's Guild Branches have participated in the scheme. An analysis of the position for the year 1908–9 shows that sixteen Councils and seven Branches of the Women's Guild shared the grant of £489. 14s. between them, Councils which had existed for the full year taking £21. 10s. each; Keynsham, £9. 10s.; and Brislington, £4. Branches of the Women's Guild took £5. 6s. 6d. each, with the exception of the Central Branch, whose share was £10. 14s. Supplementary grants for special propaganda purposes amounting to £19. 17s. 6d. were made by the Management Committee.

ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT, EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT, 1908–9.

INCOME.	£	s.	d.
Balance brought forward	106	10	0
Grants from Current Profits	489	14	0
Special Grant for Propaganda	19	17	6
Women's Subscriptions to Guilds	7	2	6
	£623	4	0

EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
PROPAGANDA—						
*Concerts, &c.	60	13	0			
*Children's Fêtes	114	15	10			
*Pianoforte Purchase	28	1	3			
Subscriptions—Right to Work Committee, &c.	16	8	6			
EDUCATIONAL—				225	18	7
Subscriptions—W.E.A., &c.	9	0	0			
*"Wheatsheafs"	65	7	4			
*Lectures and Lantern Expenses	1	6	5			
Purchases—Literature	1	8	9			
Classes	26	17	8			
Choir	7	18	7			
ADMINISTRATION—				111	18	9
Printing and Postage	50	14	2			
Rents of Rooms	36	4	0			
Delegates' Fees and Fares	28	2	8			
Secretary	10	0	0			
				125	0	10
Sundries				9	4	0
Balance at end of year				151	1	10
				£623	4	0

* These are net amounts *Dr.* or *Cr.* after balancing between gross receipts and expenditure.



EDUCATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE, 1909–10.

In drawing up this analysis, which can only be regarded as approximately accurate, some attempt has been made to discriminate between propaganda and education. Obviously the classification is a rough one. For instance, it might reasonably be claimed that children's fêtes are Co-operatively educational, and, on the other hand, that the "Wheatsheaf," ostensibly an advertising periodical, is propagandist. The most significant feature is the cost of administering the department, which, considering that the labour is practically voluntary, is rather large.

In estimating the amount of serious educational work attempted, one must have regard not only to the number of classes, but the quality of class work provided; for it might happen that really good work might be done by voluntary help, while really bad work might be done by inefficient paid teachers. Examinations are not an infallible test of knowledge gained by individual students, but averaging results of examinations over a period of years does afford some criterion of value in the mass. And, in order to give some idea as to what has been accomplished in this respect, a table is herein presented of the successes gained by those who are now Bristol members since the examination of students was accepted as part of the work of the Co-operative Union.

Without going very closely into detail, it is perhaps necessary to state that the Education Committee of the Co-operative Union for the past 25 years have been perfecting their system for developing Co-operative character in young and old. This scheme is so comprehensive as to take the child by easy stages from the kindergarten of civic science, through the media of Children's Circles, thence to classes, again graduated according to the age and understanding of the student, dealing with Co-operation, Industrial History, Economics, and Citizenship. Other classes closely related to these, but more utilitarian, are examined for Co-operative Bookkeeping and Auditing, and the Management of both Trade and Secretarial Departments.

Classes for Teachers are also catered for both under the ægis of the Co-operative Union and under the Oxford University Extension delegacy.

Certificates and also a limited number of prizes and scholarships are awarded.

In the main, at Bristol, classes have been confined to children. Of these six were held during 1908–9. A successful Bookkeeping Class was run during the same year.

In most departments of Co-operative educational work Bristol is able to record successes; and, seeing that this educational fervour has only crystallised into definite shape during the past few years, it is not unreasonable to look forward for much larger developments in the future.

This record would not be complete without mention being made of the Bristol Co-operators' Rambling and Social Club, which, though not officially recognised by the Society, yet has done much during the past twenty years, first in connection with Bristol and District Co-operators, and later, with Co-operators of the amalgamated Societies, to inspire and maintain a healthy tone among the young people.

The objects of the club as set out in its annual programme are: "To promote healthy recreation and social intercourse among its members, by visiting places of historical and other interest in the neighbourhood of Bristol, and by arranging indoor meetings of a social character."

Throughout the whole period of its existence the club has been self-supporting, the funds being raised by subscriptions of 6d. per member per annum.

From March to October each year an attractive series of rambles have been arranged for Saturday afternoons, and during the winter evenings socials, whist drives, and dancing classes have given opportunities for fellowship between the sexes under Co-operative auspices, if not official recognition.

In more than one instance lifelong partnerships have resulted through the happy comradeship engendered by

the club meetings, and on occasion special events have been organised to procure funds in aid of distressed members and others.

It would be invidious to name the many prominent Co-operators who have acted as Presidents and Vice-Presidents to the club, for all the members have had a share in its success; but to the Secretary and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. W. Porter, a special meed of praise is due for the organising ability displayed year by year in the preparation and carrying out of the programme.

In closing this chapter a word must be said for the influence which Co-operators are beginning to exert upon education generally in Bristol. It was the Co-operative Educational Department which called together representatives of the workers and University College to discuss in 1908 the question of the proposed University for Bristol and its significance to the workers. One result of that meeting was to secure representation of the working classes upon the Court of the new University, two seats out of eight being accorded to Co-operators. At the present time these honourable positions are filled by Mr. Joseph Marks (President) and Mrs. E. Greenland, a lady who has always been indefatigable in her exertions on behalf of education.

The largest proportion of the £9 expended during 1908–9 for subscriptions to educational bodies went to the Workers' Educational Association (Bristol Branch). This co-ordination of effort has always been well supported by Co-operators in Bristol, both financially and administratively. The experience gained in the Co-operative movement has made Co-operative delegates a real power in the Council meetings of the Workers' Educational Association; and through the medium of this association all that is really vital in local Co-operative enthusiasts for education is finding adequate expression, and, without doubt, the community is enriched accordingly.

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS IN EXAMINATIONS HELD UNDER CO-OPERATIVE AUSPICES.

"The History and Principles of Co-operation."

Honours.

1st Class—	E. Jackson	1904
2nd Class—	R. Anderson	1906

Advanced Stage.

1st Class—	R. Anderson*	1905
2nd Class—	H. R. Adams	1899
,,	A. H. Mundy	1899
,,	S. C. Pope	1899
,,	H. H. Hillier	1904
,,	T. J. Matthews	1904
,,	G. Dyer	1904
,,	N. E. Biggs	1905
,,	W. R. Short	1905

* Blandford Scholarship. Second for United Kingdom.

Elementary.

1st Class—	J. White	1888
,,	E. Jackson	1888
,,	H. R. Adams	1897
,,	H. Smith	1897
,,	F. J. Williams	1897
,,	C. H. Bickell	1897
,,	E. J. Righton	1897
,,	A. H. Mundy	1897
,,	A. R. Oliver	1897
,,	A. E. Gough	1897
,,	H. Whiteman	1897
,,	R. Burnell	1897
,,	J. Hobbs	1897
,,	N. E. Biggs	1897
,,	H. H. Hillier	1899
,,	Edith L. Watts	1905
,,	J. A. Conybeare	1905
,,	A. A. T. V. Gardiner	1906
2nd Class—	R. G. Pope	1899
,,	W. J. Webb	1899
,,	L. A. Lewis	1899
,,	T. J. Matthews	1899
,,	G. Dyer	1899
,,	J. Westlake	1900
,,	A. F. Coombes	1900
,,	G. Underwood	1904
,,	A. Adams	1906

Children's Examination.

*Edith Poole	1900
George Brimble	1901 and 1903
E. W. Tanner	1901
Ada Badman	1902, 1903, 1904, and 1905
Edith Culbertson	1902 and 1903
Amy Poole	1903 and 1905
Albert Hall	1904
H. C. Watts	1905
Jessie Badman	1906
F. F. West	1906
May A. Watts	1906
Myrtle Hadley	1906
W. J. M. Perkins	1907
Bessie Farley	1907
Gladys Gould	1908
H. L. West	1908
Annie W. Bredden	1908
S. B. James	1909
H. F. Rawles	1909
G. Marriott	1909
Alice Badman	1909

* Second for United Kingdom.

Teachers' Examination.

1st Class—	S. C. Pope	1906
2nd Class—	R. Anderson	1906
,,	C. A. Poole	1906
,,	W. J. Treble	1906

"INDUSTRIAL HISTORY."

Teachers (Oxford University Extension Delegacy).

1st Class—	E. Jackson	1904

Elementary (Co-operative Union).

W. R. Short	1909

"ECONOMICS."

Elementary.

2nd Class—	R. Anderson	1906

CO-OPERATIVE BOOKKEEPING.

Advanced.

1st Class—	E. J. Righton	1897
,,	F. J. Williams	1899
,,	W. H. Watson	1899

CO-OPERATIVE BOOKKEEPING ADVANCED—*continued.*

1st Class—	N. E. Biggs	1899
,,	H. G. Ford	1900
,,	G. Dyer	1900
,,	R. G. Storey	1900
,,	R. Burnell	1901
,,	A. F. Coombes	1901
,,	E. G. Aldridge	1901
,,	J. R. Bell	1906
,,	W. C. Brooks	1909
2nd Class—	F. Thatcher	1907
,,	A. E. Phillips	1897
,,	H. Paxman	1906

Elementary.

1st Class—	G. Dyer	1899
,,	A. F. Coombes	1900
,,	E. Aldridge	1900
,,	R. E. Davis	1900
,,	A. E. Cole	1900
,,	T. J. Matthews	1904
,,	A. C. Bracey	1906
,,	A. J. Eastman	1906
2nd Class—	N. E. Biggs	1897
,,	W. H. Watson	1897
,,	J. R. Burt	1897
,,	T. J. Matthews	1901
,,	W. H. Mundy	1901
,,	G. Underwood	1904
,,	H. Haddock	1904
,,	F. Jenkins	1904
,,	F. Parsons	1904
,,	A. O. Harold	1906
,,	F. C. Philpotts	1906
,,	Mabel A. Hanney	1907
,,	J. W. Morgan	1907
,,	W. J. Stearman	1907
,,	H. J. Allen	1907
,,	F. Rhodes	1907
,,	J. Rice	1908
,,	A. J. Smart	1908
,,	W. A. Lock	1908
,,	F. W. Penney	1908
,,	A. H. Hall	1908
,,	J. Seer	1908
,,	E. S. Oxley	1908
,,	H. Morton	1908
,,	W. R. Short	1908

ELEMENTARY CO-OPERATIVE BOOKKEEPING.

1st Class—	G. A. Summers	1908
,,	F. W. Davis	1908
,,	S. J. Stone	1908
,,	A. H. Huggins	1908
,,	G. A. Matthews	1908
,,	R. W. Sharland	1908
,,	F. T. Lines	1908
,,	A. Cross	1909
,,	A. Green	1909
2nd Class—	W. H. Morton	1909
,,	W. I. Morse	1909
,,	F. B. Shellard	1909
,,	A. Hill	1909
,,	H. H. Long	1909
,,	W. E. Parfitt	1909

CO-OPERATIVE BOOKKEEPING.

Second Stage.

1st Class—	F. Rhodes	1908
,,	A. F. Read	1908
,,	W. C. Brook	1908
,,	J. W. Morgan	1908
,,	Mabel A. Hanney	1908
,,	H. J. Allen	1908
,,	A. J. Harris	1908
,,	T. A. Matthews	1909
,,	A. H. Hall	1909
,,	A. H. Huggins	1909
,,	R. W. Sharland	1909
,,	J. Seer	1909
,,	J. T. Stone	1909
,,	A. J. Smart	1909
,,	W. A. Lock	1909
,,	F. W. Davis	1909
,,	G. A. Summers	1909
2nd Class—	F. T. Lines	1909
,,	H. Morton.	1909

EXAMINATION TO QUALIFY FOR THE AUDIT OF CO-OPERATIVE ACCOUNTS.

2nd Class—	Mr. N. E. Biggs	1900
,,	Mr. F. J. Williams	1904
,,	Mr. R. G. Storey	1909

Co-operative Management.

Full Certificate Advanced.

2nd Class—R. Anderson* 1906

† Includes Co-operation and Co-operative Bookkeeping.

Elementary.

A. J. Harris 1907

Elementary Management.

Pass in One Paper.

H. Barber..... 1906
A. E. Cross 1906
A. Green..... 1906
*F. Rhodes 1906
W. C. Wharton 1906

* Since passed in Co-operative Bookkeeping.

"Management and Co-operation."

Pass in Two Papers (Elementary).

*W. J. Stearman..... 1906
H. A. Wood 1907

* Since passed in Co-operative Bookkeeping.

CHAPTER V.

The Women's Co-operative Guild.

ONE of the most magnificent pieces of organisation within the Co-operative movement is the Women's Co-operative Guild. From the circumference to the centre, and from the centre to the circumference, it is a triumph of well-ordered administration.

Local independence is adequately preserved, at the same time that a spirit of national unity is maintained. It is characteristic of these features that a prominent Co-operator could exclaim: "Touch it at any point, and it's known at the Central."

The Women's Co-operative Guild is the outcome of a desire to promote intelligent Co-operative enthusiasm amongst women. It started through a discussion in the *Co-operative News*, which led to the formation of a league, just prior to the Co-operative Congress at Edinburgh in 1883. From a membership of 14 it there and then increased to 50, decided upon a subscription of 6d. a year, the formation of local branches, and the issue of an official leaflet. Its progress has been steady and continuous, and the Guild is now a vast network of administrative ability and power such as compels the respect of all Co-operative enthusiasts.

With but slight executive power in the movement, it nevertheless wields an enormous influence, both locally and nationally. It would be impossible to calculate how much.

Miss Llewelyn Davies (the General Secretary) in her "History of the Guild" says: "It has been the aim of the Guild to arouse women to a sense of the 'basket power' which they specially possess." But it is to the

everlasting credit of the women that this "basket power" has found expression in matters affecting moral considerations. The Guild has been insistent upon the highest possible standard being maintained. Justice in the treatment of labour; truth in the production and distribution of wares, have been its watchwords; while education in citizenship has been not the least of its efforts on behalf of both sexes.

The internal organisation of the Guild has evolved as a result of extensive growth. First came the Central Committee, appointed by the votes of the branches; then, branches were organised into districts, and, later, districts into sections.

In 1909 the Guild was composed of 521 branches, with a total membership of 25,942 connected with Industrial Co-operative Societies. These branches were associated in 40 districts, and also into seven larger groups called sections. They are all governed by Committees elected from their special constituencies, while the whole Guild is ruled by its Annual Congress, through a Central Committee of seven, elected by the branches. Of this Committee two are elected from the North-Western Section and one each from the Midland, Northern, Southern, Western, and South-Western.

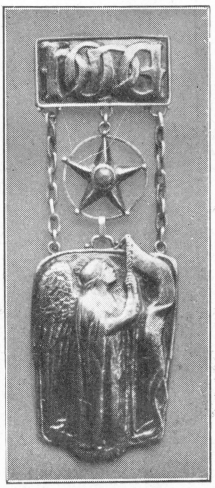
Until 1892 the Annual Meeting was held at the time of the Co-operative Congress, and as late as 1902 the detailed report of Guild work appeared in the Co-operative Congress Report. But in 1893 the first Annual Meeting of the Guild was held at Leicester, separately from the Co-operative Congress, and in 1903 the proceedings of the Women's Congress were embodied in a separate report.

The procedure at the Guild Congress follows somewhat upon the lines of the Co-operative Congress. Reports are submitted, and resolutions framed for the guidance of the Central Committee, who direct the policy during the year. Matters of Co-operative and general interest are discussed, and the breadth of outlook displayed by the Guild is evidenced in the wide range of subjects touched upon at



This is to Certify that.....
is enrolled a Member of the Women's Co-operative Guild : a self-governing organisation of 25,942 women, who work through Co-operation for the welfare of the people, seeking Freedom for their own progress, and the Equal Fellowship of men and women in the Home, the Store, the Workshop, and the State.

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD
MEMBERSHIP CARD.



Of Whole Heart cometh Hope.

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD
PRESIDENT'S BADGE.

these Annual Meetings. To mention but a few of the most recent: "Ways and Means of Increasing Membership," "The Minimum Wage," "Trade Boards," "The Credit System," "Sickroom Appliances," "Open Membership," "Women's Suffrage," "Adult Suffrage," "Education of Girls," "Unemployment," "Standard of Pay for Women Workers."

The campaigns which the Guild were carrying on in 1910 dealt with the adoption of a minimum wage scale for the women and girls employed in Stores and by the C.W.S.; the restriction and abolition of credit in Societies; the establishment of school clinics by municipalities; and adult suffrage (one man, one vote; one woman, one vote).

At first the Guild was viewed with suspicion; it had to live down a great amount of prejudice; and it is still unfortunately true that there is, in many quarters, a strong reluctance to encourage the women. This is usually the case where educational propaganda is wholly lacking or but imperfectly appreciated. It is sound, practical sense, attested by experience, that "no Society is complete in its machinery for carrying out Co-operative ideals unless it possesses what have been termed 'the three wheels,' a Management Committee, an Educational Committee, a branch of the Women's Guild." The Bristol Society recognises this. The work of the Educational Department and the local branches of the Women's Guild is combined in a unique organisation, which was dealt with in the previous chapter. The purpose of this chapter is briefly to scan the development of the eight Bristol Branches of the Women's Guild now existing.

On November 27th, 1889, according to the minutes of the Bristol and District Society, Miss Cole was permitted the use of the Committee-room, together with fire and light. A couple of months later, or, to be precise, on January 15th, 1890, the formation of a Branch of the Women's Guild was reported, and fifty chairs were ordered, presumably for their use. This was the Newfoundland Road Branch.

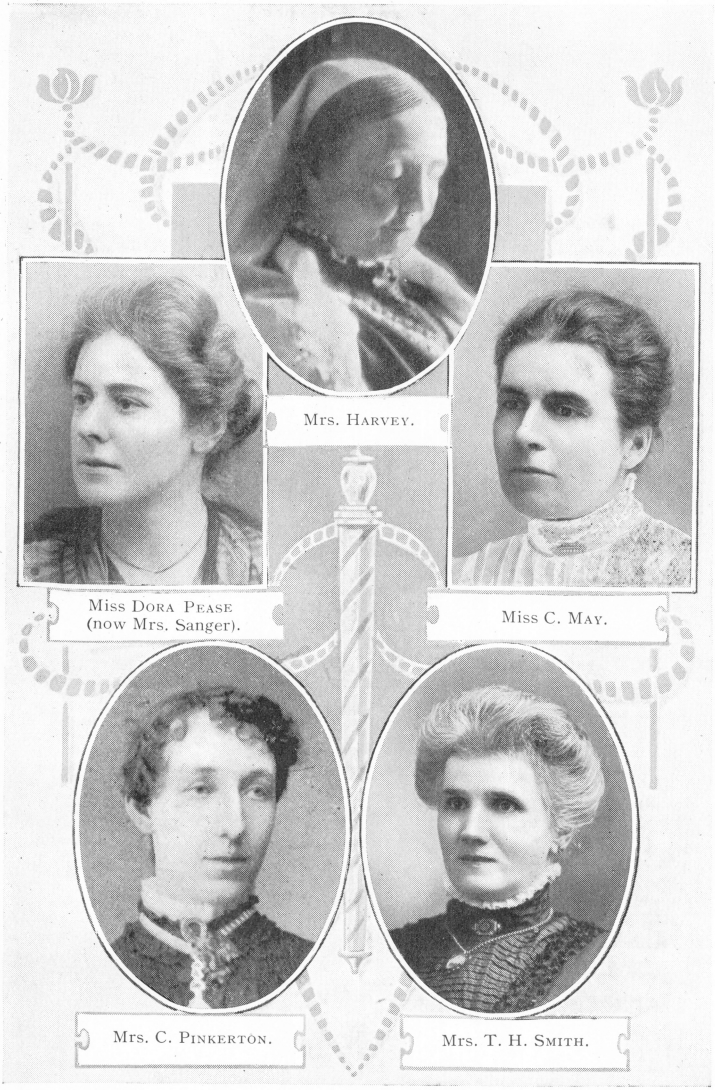
On October 15th of the same year it was further reported that 5s. had been taken from the education fund to permit five members of the Educational Committee to accompany the Women's Guild to Grant's Castle. Mrs. Harvey was the first President of this Branch, and Mrs. T. H. Smith (wife of the Society's Secretary) the first Secretary. Another earnest pioneer was Miss Dora Pease, for a short while President. It was this lady who brought Miss C. E. May into the movement on November 19th, 1891, and thus provided the Women's Co-operative Guild with one of its most strenuous workers.

The Bedminster Branch was initiated largely through the efforts of Mr. T. J. Hopkins and Miss C. E. May, on November 28th, 1892. The first half-yearly report speaks of a membership of seventy-three, with an average attendance of thirty-four at the ordinary Guild meetings. Some difficulty was experienced at the commencement to get officials to serve for any lengthy period, many changes taking place during the first six months.

As with the early Branches of the Bristol and District Society, attention was given to the conditions of employment prevailing in the Store, and for about a year one of the members, Mrs. Gough, served on the Bedminster Management Committee.

The following are the names of officers, past and present:—

PRESIDENTS	Mrs. SPROULE.
	Mrs. A. L. MARTIN. About 11 years.
	Mrs. E. T. MORGAN. About 2 years.
	Mrs. E. HALLIDAY.. 1910.
VICE-PRESIDENTS ...	Mrs. DALBY.
	Mrs. A. L. MARTIN.
	Mrs. E. HALLIDAY.
	Mrs. GOUGH.
	Mrs. HARRISON.
	Mrs. E. T. MORGAN 1910.
TREASURERS	Mrs. GOUGH.
	Mrs. W. RIDER.
	Mrs. SALTER.



LEADERS OF THE FIRST BRISTOL BRANCHES OF THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.

SECRETARIES	Mrs. T. J. WRIGHT..	1 year.
	Mrs. GRUNDY and Miss REED	1 year.
	Mrs. HALLIDAY	12 years.
	Mrs. POBJOY	3 years.
	Mrs. CLOTHIER	1910.

PROGRAMME JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1910.

Jan. 10.—Paper: "What is a Good Dividend?" Mrs. Harrison.
„ 24.—Address: "Poor Law Reports." Mrs. Falk.
Feb. 7.—Address: "Children under Poor Law." Mrs. Hicks.
„ 21.—Address: "Unemployment." Miss Brown.

St. George's Road Branch was started in March, 1893. Lawrence Hill followed in April of the same year. The St. George's Road Branch was inaugurated at a meeting held in the Old Bethel Ship; and the first meeting was held in Mrs. Pinkerton's sitting-room, her husband being at the time Manager of the St. George's Road shop. Miss Perry, Miss O'Brien, and Miss Williams successively held the offices of President, and the Branch held together with but moderate success. It can only be said to have lingered after the latter lady left the district. The Lawrence Hill Branch was officered by Miss Perry as President, and Mrs. N. E. Smith as Secretary, the latter being the wife of the then General Manager of the Bristol and District Society.

The early Branches of the Women's Guild, small though they were in membership, did some really good pioneer work. At the time it was not quite so apparent. Their meetings were only attended by a few regularly, but these few were quite energetic. Miss C. E. May (then Vice-President of the Newfoundland Road Branch) was the inspiring genius; and, while preparing the ground for the assimilation of matters definitely Co-operative, interested the members in reforms of general application, or social talks on educational topics; the movements for freeing the slaves in Zanzibar and for the relief of the Armenians being among the subjects dealt with, a sum of £1. 10s. 2d. being handed over in aid of the latter object.

Talks on the Poor Law, Nursing, Old-Age Pensions, and Children in Workhouses were variously discussed, led by such able exponents as Miss Clifford and others. A Cookery Class was arranged and well attended in 1895.

Meanwhile, some of the Guild members were coming to the front in the Bristol and District Society's affairs. Mrs. Sheppard, of the Newfoundland Road Branch, had obtained a seat on the Management Committee, and questions were put forward respecting the hours and conditions of labour for the employés. The reforms which have since been brought about in respect to these matters were initiated by the Women's Guild, who systematically kept ideals to the fore, and, by united effort, succeeded in placing their nominees at the top of the poll for the Management Committee. From their own ranks Mrs. Fidkin and Mrs. Greenland were thus elected, and support was accorded to male members who were known to be actively sympathetic towards more Co-operative practices.

The existence of three Branches within the comparatively small area then covered was felt to be a weakness, and as far back as 1894 a suggestion was made that amalgamation should be effected. This idea, however, did not materialise for six years, when some of the earlier enthusiasm had begun to wane. At a District Meeting held at Lawrence Hill in 1901 the subject was broached again, and definite steps were taken to bring this about. Thus, the Bristol Central Branch, so named because it is an amalgamation of those three older branches, Lawrence Hill, Newfoundland Road, and St. George's Road, can trace its beginnings back to the dark days of the Bristol and District Society in 1891.

Subsequent developments have proved that amalgamation to have been a wise step. More real educational work has resulted.

The joint meeting was held to decide the matter on September 5th, 1901, and the new Branch formally opened. Officers were elected four months later.

PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES OF THE BRISTOL BRANCHES OF THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.



Top Row: Mrs. Clothier, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cook, Miss May, Mrs. Found, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Burge.
Second Row: Mrs. Halliday, Mrs. Young, Mrs. Skidmore, Mrs. Greenland, Mrs. Tadd, Mrs. Treble.
Third Row: Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Edwards.

Mention has already been made of some active workers in the old branches, but there were others who deserve to be remembered in connection therewith, notably Mrs. Ackerman, Mrs. Mann, and Mrs. Sophia Marsh, who rendered quiet, but useful service.

Before leaving this early period, it is worth noting that a branch was formed at Staple Hill in 1899, having at one time twenty members; but, isolated as they were, this branch gradually dwindled away.

The Central Branch has concentrated attention upon the administration of the Society's affairs. It has always been well represented at the business meetings, and has always had at least one member on the Management Committee. At present (1910) two are thus serving, Mesdames Fidkin and Found. In addition to taking a large part in the general educational propaganda of the Society, the Branch has always carried on an active educational campaign amongst its own members. The Secretary has written thus:—

> At each of our meetings (which are held weekly) we have an address or paper on some subject of interest, either from an outside speaker or a member of our own branch. This is followed by questions and open discussion. The range of subjects has been very wide, embracing a course of Ambulance Lectures, Nursing, Poor Law Work, Factory Acts, &c. We usually send delegates to all Guild Congresses, the Guild Congress, W.E.A. Lectures, District Association Conferences, &c., reports of which are given at our meetings. We think these delegations most educational, as they tend to broaden the views of our members, and help them to realise that our local Society is only part of one great movement which exists for the uplifting of the workers.

Programmes, of which the following is a specimen, are printed and circulated every two months:—

PROGRAMME FOR JUNE, 1909.

June 3.—No Meeting.
,, 10.—"The Trades Boards Bill." Miss C. E. May.
,, 17.—"The Children's Act." Miss Townsend.
,, 24.—"A Talk on Health." Mrs. Walker.

The Branch is more than local in its activities. For three years, viz., 1902 to 1905, Mrs. Fidkin represented

the Western and South-Western Sections on the Central Committee, and at the present time another of its members, Mrs. Jaques, is serving her third year as a member of the Western Section. The following is a list of past and present officials:—

PRESIDENT	Miss C. E. MAY	Jan., 1902–10.
VICE-PRESIDENTS ...	Mrs. GODFREY	Jan., 1902–10.
	Mrs. ACKERMAN ...	Jan., 1902–July, 1903.
	Mrs. QUAINTON ...	July, 1903–Jan., 1905.
	Mrs. FIDKIN	Jan., 1905–10.
TREASURERS	Mrs. FIDKIN.....	Jan., 1902–5.
	Mrs. JAQUES.....	Jan., 1905–Oct., 1909.
	Mrs. HILLMAN	Oct., 1909, to present.
SECRETARIES	Mrs. CONNOLLY	Jan., 1902–Sept., 1903.
	Mrs. FOUND	Oct., 1903, to 1910.

At least one member has always served on the District Committee, so that the branch has always been in close touch with others in the section. By means of lectures and discussions the members have carried on educational work of a varied character, and a Needlework Class, with an average attendance of twenty, was successfully conducted during the early days. Dressmaking demonstrations have also formed part of their programme.

Following close on the Bristol Central was the establishment of Greenbank Branch on May 13th, 1903. In conjunction with the Educational Council, valuable educational work has been done by this Branch, especially in the direction of organising children's classes. A programme of an exhaustive nature is prepared; and every week matters of general social interest are discussed. The first President (Mrs. Sheppard), who, prior to the establishment of this Branch, was attached to the Central Branch, has the unique distinction of being the first woman elected to the Board of Management in Bristol. The President in 1910 was Mrs. Turner. The office of Secretary has been filled by Mrs. Cummings, Mrs. Pierce, Mrs. Perry, Mrs. Moon, and lately by Mrs. Skidmore. Of



BRISTOL GUILDSWOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OR THE S.W. OR W. SECTION.

Treasurers there have been three, Mesdames Mansfield, Robbins, and Perry. The programme for February and March, 1910, was as follows:—

PROGRAMME FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1910.

Feb. 3.—Lecture: "Palestine." Mrs. Hawkes (W.E.A.). Tea, 3d.
,, 10.—2nd Lecture: "Mazzini." Miss Budgett (W.E.A.).
,, 17.—Chats on "John Gregory's Poems." Mr. T. Phillips.
,, 24.—3rd Lecture: "Mazzini." Miss Budgett (W.E.A.).
Mar. 3.—Reports. Tea, 3d.
,, 10.—Lecture: "Elizabeth Fry." Miss Lauder (W.E.A.).
,, 17.—"Trade Unionism." Mrs. Jaques.
,, 24.—Lecture: "Christina Rossetti." Miss Lauder.

Next came Totterdown Branch, established on March 18th, 1906, with a membership of thirty-eight, through the energy of Mrs. Drew, then a member of the Bedminster Branch. The members have at times undertaken the task of canvassing the district to enrol new Co-operative members. They have also pushed for prominent display of Co-operatively-produced goods in the windows of the Totterdown shop.

This Branch has been especially active in general Co-operative propaganda, one of their members, Mrs. Treble, being on the Central Committee, and another on the local District Conference Association of the Co-operative Union. Further, another of their members, Mrs. Tillett, has sat for some years on the Bristol Board of Guardians. A programme of educational work is issued, a portion of which for 1910 is herewith reproduced:—

PROGRAMME FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUAY, 1910.

Jan. 4.—Social.
,, 11.—"Infant Management." Dr. A. Cornall (2nd Lecture).
,, 18.—Mrs. Parr.
,, 25.—Selected.
Feb. 1.—"Suffrage." Miss Tanner.
,, 8.—"C.W.S. Productions." Mr. E. Jackson.
,, 15.—Hygiene Talks. Miss Miles.
,, 22.—"Elizabeth Fry." Miss Lauder.

The officers have been and are as follows:—

PRESIDENTS—	SECRETARIES—
Mrs. RAMSEY.	Mrs. HART ANTHONY.
Mrs. DREW.	Mrs. BEN PHILLIPS.
Mrs. HAMPTON.	Mrs. DREW.
Mrs. LLOYD.	Mrs. ANTHONY.
Mrs. TREBLE.	Mrs. HAMPTON.
VICE-PRESIDENTS—	Mrs. SAUNDERS.
Mrs. DREW.	Mrs. BURGE.
Mrs. HAMPTON.	TREASURERS—
Mrs. THAKER.	Mrs. HOLLOWAY.
Mrs. ANTHONY.	Mrs. TREBLE.
	Mrs. MARTIN.

The Bishopston Branch was inaugurated on Tuesday, November 17th, 1896. There had been two previous unsuccessful attempts to start a branch, and, on both occasions, Mrs. Bracey had been appointed President, and held office until 1899. "The object of starting the branch was to educate women to become true Co-operators and not 'divi.-hunters,' so that they could all work for the good of all. It has paid special attention to credit trading, sweated industries, Co-operative productions, women's suffrage, child labour and education, minimum wage for Co-operative employés, the Guild convalescent fund, trade unions for women, the medical inspection and feeding of school children, abolition of entrance fees, the need of women in public life, sick nursing, Co-operation, high and low dividends." Amongst other methods employed to educate its members, this Branch sent a deputation to cotton mills in Lancashire, to examine for themselves the conditions under which half-timers work, the result being that the members are now enthusiastically resolved that the raising of school age to fifteen, or even sixteen, is a most desirable reform. The need for medical and sickroom appliances, and the resolution that such should be purchased by the Society for the use of its members, was brought forward by this Branch. Several members have had the honour of serving on the District Committee. An excellent programme is

provided throughout the year, a portion of which for 1910 was as follows:—

PROGRAMME FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1910.

Jan. 13.—Reopening of Guild. Autumn Sectional Conference Report. Mrs. Watts.

,, 20.—Lecture: Miss Townsend.

,, 27, Feb. 4.—"How Women and Children are Protected by Law." Miss Jowitt.

Feb. 10, 17.—"Some Bristol Streets and the Stories they Suggest." Miss Cashmore, B.A.

,, 24.—"Suggested Changes in the Poor Law." Miss E. B. Taylor.

PRESIDENTS.

Mrs. BRACEY.	Mrs. HAMLEY.
Mrs. WIDLAKE.	Mrs. WATTS.
Mrs. FOURACRE.	Mrs. STONE.

SECRETARIES.

Mrs. BOULTER.	Mrs. MOON.
Mrs. HORNBY.	Mrs. BROWN.

The Kingsland Road Branch is one outcome of an enthusiasm inspired by the Co-operative Women's Guild, intended to bring the benefits of Co-operation within reach of those whose means of livelihood are more or less precarious; and, as this experiment is of more than passing interest, and the success of the scheme, so far as it went, largely due to the Kingsland Road Guilds-women and their helpers from other branches, it is fitting that the record should find place here.

It will be remembered that one of the old Bristol Societies—the Equitable and Industrial—had a most flourishing Branch in this neighbourhood in the sixties of last century. At that time the engineering works of the Bristol and Exeter Railway, and others, were in full swing, and a large body of workers in fairly steady employment peopled the district. The withdrawal of those industries meant also the withdrawal of families who were dependent upon this work for their daily bread.

This may have had to do with the downfall of the old Society; but certain it is that, through the transference of these works, from being a busy hive of comparatively prosperous industry the district began to stagnate, and from the almost premier position it once occupied as the workshop of the city it has become a monotony of houses and streets, good, bad, and indifferent, portions reeking of slumland, with all its attendant evils.

Surrounded by evidences of social decadence, to say nothing of industrial depression, the people become dulled to the sense of intelligent combination for mutual help; and such districts as Kingsland Road, to be found in most large industrial centres, rarely provide the material for voluntary association upon Co-operative lines.

Mr. F. Hardern, J.P., the President of the Congress in 1899 at Liverpool, it was, who called attention to the fact that the movement was not reaching those who were most helpless—the very poorest of the community. With characteristic energy the Women's Guild took up the matter, investigated the causes, and suggested remedies. Many Societies at the time had Branches established in the congested districts of their town. These were visited and reported upon. The characteristic money and trading customs were observed in these localities. The people were visited in their homes, local town officials were interviewed, and conferences between the Management, Educational, and Guild Committees were held with the Guild investigators, who reported on their work, and suggested actions which the local Societies might take. This inquiry formed the basis for more specialised suggestions. The report was published in 1902.

Largely as a result of this agitation, Bristol Co-operators decided to open a Branch Store in Kingsland Road, a district familiarly called "The Dings." This was in 1901. But the Store attracted those who might be termed the upper crust of the workers, chiefly railwaymen and those working at factories adjoining. A little trade was done by the poorer class, but none of these were

members. The existence of this Branch, however, made it easy for an interesting experiment to be made by the Women's Guild.

To celebrate their coming-of-age in 1904, amongst other projects, it was decided by the Women's Congress at Sheffield that, whenever a Society was prepared to organise active propaganda in such districts as required this quickening influence, the Central Committee might assist by offering the services of a temporary organiser. Bristol Society was the first to be approached, and the principal Guild officials interviewed the Management and Educational bodies, soliciting the aid of all those taking part in the inner life of the Society. The scope of the suggested work was admirably set out in due course as follows:—

Objects.—To increase trade and membership, especially among the poorest in this neighbourhood; to establish a social life round the Store, consisting of special features to build up habits of thrift.

Organiser.—The Central Committee of the Women's Guild undertake to provide an organiser for three months.

Advising Committee and Volunteers.—A Committee, consisting of one representative from the Management Committee, one from the Finance Committee, and five from the local branches of the Guild, to be appointed to help Miss Rushworth (organiser), and a band of volunteer workers to be collected.

Work.—(1) All work connected with the Penny Bank, club, contributions to share capital, and entrance fees, to be put into Miss Rushworth's hands, an office being provided in the small warehouse next the Store; (2) House-to-house visiting to advertise Store and explain conditions of membership, to invite to meetings, &c., and to collect money; (3) Arrangement of teas and entertainments, homely talks to the women, organising of a Guild branch, training of children, &c. First month's work: A free entertainment, a procession of Penny Bank children, visiting and office work, small meetings of women.

In carrying out the above work leaflets, bills, notices will be needed.

As much of the work outlined for the Guild organiser came within the scope of the Management and Finance Committees, it was hoped that the Guild fund might be supplemented by grants from the above Committees.

It was suggested that it would be a great help to the work if the entrance fee of 1s. were converted into a contribution to the share capital.

It will be seen that the formation of a Guild Branch was one of the objects to be attained, and the Kingsland Road Branch is one of the results of that memorable campaign. The special propaganda work was carried on under the immediate supervision of the Advisory Committee appointed under the scheme, the organising being shared by Miss Rushworth (Halifax) and Miss Greener (Darlington), and, at a later period, by voluntary local helpers, prominent among whom were Mr., Mrs., and Miss Jaques.

The active propaganda lasted from September 18th, 1905, to March 31st, 1906, during which period no efforts



THE WOMEN'S GUILD SPECIAL CAMPAIGN AT KINGSLAND ROAD.

were spared, either on the part of the Women's Guild or the local enthusiasts of both sexes, to rouse the slumbering consciences of the people who might be expected most to benefit by Co-operation; but it cannot be said that the immediate results were encouraging. The children were captured, however, if their parents were not, and that augurs well for the future.

The methods adopted were of an eminently practical nature. The organiser was recognised as general receiver of money for entrance fees, share capital, club, and Penny

Bank. Canvassing and bill distribution were undertaken by willing bands of helpers. Concerts, lantern lectures, and teas were organised at intervals, to say nothing of a weekly homely chat for women on the Store premises. Attempts were made to induce the Society to abolish the entrance fee, but without success. Steps were also taken to stock the Store with goods specially adapted, in respect to size and price of the package, to the convenience of those of very limited means. The policy was quite successful. The chief bugbear was credit. Most of the women were in debt to shopkeepers. Of some it was



PENNY BANKERS IN KINGSLAND ROAD.

reported that they had even joined the Society to get a week's or fortnight's credit on bread, and never spent another penny at the Store. An attempt was made to help a few of these to become more provident, but the lapses were a little disappointing.

But the campaign was a series of field days for the children, who most enthusiastically supported the Penny Bank. A special feature was that of a floral procession of these Penny Bankers. About 350 children turned out,

all blithe and gay, some with flowers, others with flags or banners. The procession was accompanied by a decorated lorry, upon which was placed an enormous loaf and several small ones. Two stalwart policemen also joined the body, giving an official tone to the proceedings. The alleys and courts disgorged their occupants, who cheered the children on their way. The results of the four months' work during which the Guild organiser was in Bristol were reported upon as follows:—

Number of New Members	30
,, ,, ,, paying Entrance Fee	9
Total	39

During three previous months the number of new members, 3. Trade, £1,315. 13s. 1d. Average per week, £69. 4s. 10d. During three previous months average trade, £65. 15s. 4d. Number of Penny Bankers, 236; number of deposits, 1,180; amount deposited, £40. 15s. 6d.; average weekly number of deposits, 62; average weekly amount deposited, £2. 2s. 11d. During previous three months average deposits, 7; average deposited, 16s. 9d.

Number of *Co-operative News* sold, 279; weekly average, 14.

BALANCE SHEET FROM SEPTEMBER 18TH TO MARCH 31ST.

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
GRANTS—				Printing	3	12	6
Management Com..	10	0	0	Lectures, Processions, &c.	12	2	2
Educ. Councils	10	0	0	Organisers—			
Coming-of-Age Fd.	32	13	5	Salaries and Fares..	33	9	11
				Office Expenses	2	5	8
					51	10	3
				Balance	1	3	2
	£52	13	5		£52	13	5

The results are considered very satisfactory considering the difficulties encountered. The size of the Store, which is too crowded if more than four customers are in it together, is prohibitive to a large increase of trade. But, given good premises, a stable dividend, low prices, suitable and varied goods, and propagandist work, a most successful Store could undoubtedly be run in this poor neighbourhood. It is hoped that the Society may see its way, when its present special circumstances have been mastered, to develop this work on a scale likely to win still further the support of the district.

The Kingsland Road Branch of the Guild is by no means the least energetic of the Bristol Branches; and it continues to do good work among the children, besides doing its best, by encouraging educational work, to establish its members in Co-operative principles. The officers, past and present, are:—

PRESIDENTS—	SECRETARIES—
Mrs. COOKE.	Mrs. BROOKS.
Mrs. GREENLAND.	Mrs. RICHARDS.
TREASURER—	Mrs. HALE.
Mrs. BATT.	Mrs. COOKE.

During 1905 another Branch was established in one of the outlying districts of Bristol. By reason of their distance from any centre, some of the Kingswood women could not take an active part in the work of the Guild, and, a sufficient interest being evinced, a Branch was established in their locality. Useful propaganda work has been done, and meetings of an educational character held.

The latest Branch was formed at Shirehampton in 1909. This is really a revival of an old branch under the ægis of the new Society, for in 1901 the Shirehampton and Avonmouth Branch did much to create interest in the old Shirehampton and Avonmouth Society. Mrs. Smith was the President and Mrs. Young the Secretary, the latter also serving on the Management Committee. Some details of their work have been included in the chapter recording the history of the Society at Shirehampton and Avonmouth.

Except as individuals, the members of the Women's Guild have no place in the administration of the Society's affairs, but, by means of their organisation and frequent interchange of thought, they have been able to establish and maintain a healthy supervision over the Society's internal affairs. Guild members are almost inevitably Council members also, and not only through their own associated efforts, but also through their influence on the Councils, Guilds-women have been in a position to determine the policy of the Society, and, at times, they have

done so most effectively. Thus the hours and conditions of labour in the Society have improved largely as a result of Women's Guild agitation. As far back as 1893 the women were asking that the Bristol and District Society's shops should close at 9 instead of 10-30 p.m. on Saturdays. The Committee of Management recommended them to appeal to the members. The Guild members immediately issued a petition, and secured a list of 160 names in favour of the proposed reduction of hours. A resolution was brought forward at the Quarterly Business Meeting of the Society on September 16th, 1893. The Management Committee, finding there was strong feeling on the subject, recommended the change, which was carried unanimously. In 1894 the Women's Guild Branches were agitating for trade union hats to be stocked, and, within more recent times, a very successful campaign was instituted in favour of the sale of leadless glazed pottery, the C.W.S. coming in for condemnation for its tardy recognition of the leadless ware.

On the other hand, the Guild Branches were unable to carry their proposal to reduce the entrance fee for new members. It is probable they would have done so if they had persevered with their usual persistence, but other matters of business intervened for the time being, and the question was allowed to drop.

That women may be useful upon Management Committees cannot be questioned among Bristol Co-operators; and the minute books show that in matters of detail the women are strong in criticism, and fairly accurate in judgment. The mere man might waive the question of black dresses for shop assistants upon the score of faddism, and, as a matter of fact, did up till 1902, when the women on the Committee pointed out to their colleagues that the coloured dresses of the assistants made a bad "set-off" to customers judging coloured material. As a result the fiat went forth that black should be worn, but that the young ladies should be supplied with material at cost price, and Mrs. Fidkin and Mrs. Greenland were told off to explain matters.

MEMBERS OF BRISTOL BRANCHES SERVING ON THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.



Top Row : Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Young, Mrs. Clothier.
Second Row : Mrs. Godfrey, Mrs. Greenland, Mrs. Skidmore.

CHAPTER VI.

Associations of Producers.

THERE is another method by which the workers have sought to develop the Co-operative idea in order to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of capital. This method was borrowed by the Christian Socialists from France, and, during the middle of last century, it was propagated with extraordinary enthusiasm and ability by those famous pioneers of social reform.

Robert Owen was not only an idealist, he was an eminently practical business man; but those gentlemen were lacking the expert knowledge of Owen. They saw the evil results of the Industrial Revolution, the substitution of the factory hand for the craftsman, and the degradation of men and women to mere machines, without fully realising that the introduction of machinery had superseded for ever the domestic system of industry. Consequently, their purview of the industrial necessities of the age was limited to the necessities of the workpeople, and their schemes of Co-operation proceeded upon the lines of uniting bodies of workmen, with self-government. The movement lasted but a few years, being eventually torn to pieces by internal dissensions and the competition of one Society with another.

Amongst other forms, the ideal of the Christian Socialists, and, to some extent, of Robert Owen, too, has found expression in industrial partnerships, of which quite a large number now exist in England. In 1887 it would appear that something of this kind might have been established by a firm of boot manufacturers in Bristol, but the workers were by no means keen, and the matter was dropped. The circular which was issued by

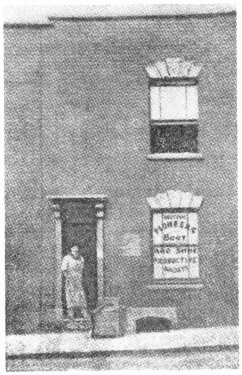
Messrs. Waterman, the firm in question, to their employés is not without interest. This ran as follows:—

Waterman and Company propose for an experimental period to share the net profits of their manufacturing business with the producers, regarding this as pre-eminently the true principle of Co-operation, and offering a solution of the relations that should exist between capital and labour. After providing for the usual charges, such as interest on capital, rent and taxes, trade expenses, wages, salaries, &c., it is proposed to equally share the net profits between capital and labour. From such ascertained net profit 10 per cent will be set aside as a reserve fund, so that future deficiencies on profit and loss account may be shared by labour as well as by capital. To every employé who has been in the employ of the firm for a period of six months will be apportioned their share of profits according to amount of salary or wages earned. Out of such share it is intended to make a cash payment, and the remainder will be reserved for other purposes of a beneficiary character, after the example of the well-known house of Leclaire, of Paris.

While it does not appear that Messrs. Waterman's scheme was accepted by the workpeople as a whole, one of them, at least, was among those who were responsible for an actual attempt being made in 1888–9 upon more or less Industrial Partnership lines to establish an association of producers in Bristol. There were other contributory factors, it is true, not the least being the faith which was establishing itself in the Co-operative idea through the operations of the Stores. The idea of self-governing workshops, with almost endless modification, has always had a fascination for the idealist in Co-operative enterprise; and it is not surprising that, among the many attempts to realise the ideal, Bristol should have taken its part.

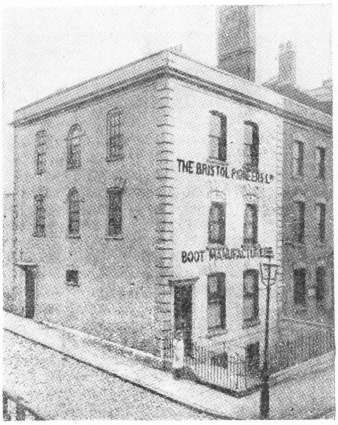
Like the movement in the 'fifties, inspiration seems to have come from outside the workers themselves. Starting in 1882, it was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. F. Gilmore Barnett to invite to their house some members of the working classes and others interested in social and political subjects, to discuss topics of mutual interest. These meetings, it is true, did not actually formulate schemes of a practical nature, but many of those who met together in this way were inspired to co-operate in various activities which have since become definite agencies for

social reform. Some of them were already associated with Co-operation in connection with one or other of the two distributive Societies; in fact, it is claimed that much of the early Co-operative enthusiasm, both at Bedminster and in connection with the Bristol and District Society, was kept alive through these talks at Mr. Barnett's house. Some of these individuals were among the originators of the first association of producers in Bristol, and they were helped financially and with advice by Mr. Barnett.



111, TWINNELL ROAD, First Premises of the Pioneers' Boot and Shoe Society.

In this connection it is worth noticing, too, that from 1887 there had been considerable controversy in the movement as a whole as to methods which should govern Co-operative production; and an impetus was thereby given towards experimenting in a practical way according to the views of particular theorists. No less than fourteen out of a total of fifty-four associations of producers were registered between 1888 and 1890 in the United Kingdom. One of these fourteen was the Bristol Pioneers' Boot and Shoe Society, registered on August 21st, 1889, and it came into being thus: At Mr. Barnett's instigation, in the fall of 1888, a few working men met together to discuss the possibilities of Productive Co-operation in Bristol. As a



16, KING'S SQUARE, Later Premises.

result of this and other conferences, a scheme approximating to an Industrial Partnership was devised, whereby Mr. Barnett agreed to lend the sum of £100 for seven years to four men upon the express conditions: (1) That interest should be paid half yearly; (2) That 50 per cent of the net profits should be divided amongst the workers in proportion to their earnings. Articles of Association were signed on October 14th, 1888, by Messrs. F. G. Barnett, W. Saunders, S. W. Pritchett, F. Smith, and J. W. H. Wall. Premises were obtained in Twinnell Road, Easton Road, machinery installed, and material purchased in readiness for the start, which was made in November.

An appeal was made to Co-operative Societies for trade, with results calculated to depress any but the most ardent enthusiasts. The Pioneers quickly realised that the basis of their constitution was not in harmony with the prevailing Co-operative sentiment, and, after a few months, a fresh start was made, this time as a registered Co-operative Productive Society. The original nine members consisted of the five pioneers already mentioned, with Messrs. John Brown, J. W. Griffith, A. Tambling, and J. F. Hopkins, these four being also prominent members of the distributive Societies. This definite linking up with the Co-operative movement strengthened the business; membership and capital began to improve.

The first half-yearly report had to chronicle a loss of £27. 13s. 6½d., which was attributed to the difficulties usually experienced in starting a Co-operative Productive Society, also to the fact that a dispute in the boot trade had forced up wages before the Society had time to adjust selling prices. There was a membership of 33, with a share capital holding of £108, investors of loan capital providing £283. This start did not augur well for the future, but during the next six months the position did improve somewhat. Trade doubled, and a profit of nearly £50 was made, enabling the Committee to clear their former deficit and pay dividend to labour £11. 11s. 1d., and to customers £3. 17s. 11d. An appeal was made for more

THE VYVYANS, who met with Mr. and Mrs. Barnett to discuss social reform.



Top Row: Messrs. W. Saunders, A. Bullock, A. Harris, J. D. Marshall, A. Dowling, — Casling, — Webber, — Pollard.
Second Row: Messrs. J. Fox, J. Huntingdon, T. Thomas, W. H. Bullock, C. Keene Lewis, Jno. Gregory.
Third Row: Messrs. F. G. Barnett, T. B. Foxley, J. F. Hopkins, W. J. Petherick, Mrs. F. G. Barnett.

support from Co-operators, emphasis being laid on the fact that their goods were all leather, and solid, no composition runners or skeletons being used in any of their work. The half year ending May 26th, 1891, again turned out very badly, the accounts showing a loss of £23. 5s. 3d., attributed to increases in wages and the price of raw material.

From this time forward the position grew worse. Membership reached its highest point with 78 in 1892, and trade for the half year ending June 30th, 1892, was £1,785 16s. 2½d., showing a profit of £9. 10s. 9d. In the March of that year a move had been made to more commodious premises in King Square, and increased responsibilities had been incurred in the purchase of this property. For the next four years losses accumulated, and on December 31st, 1896, notwithstanding great sacrifice on the part of loan holders in respect to interest, there was a total deficit of £337. 18s. 10d., an amount nearly sufficient to cancel the whole of the members' share capital. With desperate earnestness the few enthusiasts struggled on, making the most they could of the sentiment which attaches itself to a Co-operative ideal; but they were under a cloud. In the first place, their constitution had never received the full sanction of their distributive brethren; further, they had never exhibited the qualifications which make for commercial success, and, although regarded by Co-operative enthusiasts with sentimental sympathy, neither Societies nor individuals were disposed to support the venture with more trade or capital.

The climax was reached towards the end of 1903. At the Quarterly Meeting of the Bristol and District Society in December it had been decided by a none too decisive majority that £50 should be invested in the Bristol Pioneers, providing £200 was raised elsewhere, and that this investment was accompanied by representation. It would appear that this was with a view to reconstruct the Society, for the registered name of " The Bristol Pioneers " was dropped for that of " The Bristonia Society " during the course of the debate. The decision was promptly

challenged, a motion being tabled to rescind at the next Quarterly Meeting. This motion was never proceeded with, for, before the meeting was held, the project for reconstruction fell through.

The statistics given in this work relating to the Society have been taken from its balance sheets as far as they are available. They differ very considerably from those published in the Annual Reports of the Co-operative Union, which did not at any time show the really hopeless condition into which the Society had sunk from 1894 onwards.

In her account of Associations of Producers, published in 1891, Miss B. Potter (now Mrs. Sidney Webb) classifies this Society among the worst specimens of Co-operative bastardy, giving some figures which apparently support her contentions. According to the return which this lady prepared, the Bristol Pioneers' Boot and Shoe Society had 65 shareholders, a subscribed capital of £500, of which only £120 was found by the workers themselves; there were 33 employés, of whom 30 only were members. Miss Potter says that of such associations, taken as a class, it is not possible to speak too severely. "For the most part they are associations of small masters, extracting profit out of the labour of non-members."

Miss Potter's figures approximate towards those shown in the balance sheet issued in September, 1890, and probably had reference to the exact position at the end of that year, when both membership and capital had increased.

Undoubtedly some of this capital was subscribed by Co-operative Societies. It is certain that a large portion of the loan was provided by Mr. Barnett, so that, while Miss Potter may have been justified for general purposes in classifying the Society as she did, her strictures do not apply so forcibly to the Bristol Pioneers' Society as they may have done to others. But the ideal of a self-governing workshop was certainly departed from, since a majority of shareholders were non-workers.

Throughout the whole period of its existence the Society was hampered through its limited capital and lack of administrative experience. On the one hand, it had to beg for capital in order to maintain ordinary commercial efficiency, and on the other, it had to persuade customers that its wares were equal to those marketed by firms to whom such considerations were of practically no account. "The sentiment" was constantly to the fore; and although in small doses this medicine acts as a tonic to Co-operative business men, it is apt to become enervating when administered at all times and seasons; and in due course the Bristol Pioneers' Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Society had to yield up its life in obedience to the modern dictum that the fittest shall survive, the fittest being those who are enabled to make use of the most up-to-date labour-saving appliances, and can tap the first market for raw material.

Another experiment was entered upon in 1889. Mr. John Gregory, with a few of his friends, sought to utilise the periods of rest during strikes, which just then were frequent in the boot trade, by doing work upon Co-operative lines. A Society was registered, having for its title "The Bristol Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Society," and Mr. John Gregory was installed as President. The ideal these few working shoemakers set before themselves was by no means new. Robert Owen suggested in 1819 that the unemployed question might be settled by putting such wasted labour into useful operation for supplying the needs of those otherwise unemployed; and time and again during the nineteenth century it has been suggested that trade unions might have made more practical use of their strike funds by starting workshops based upon the co-partnership of the workers.

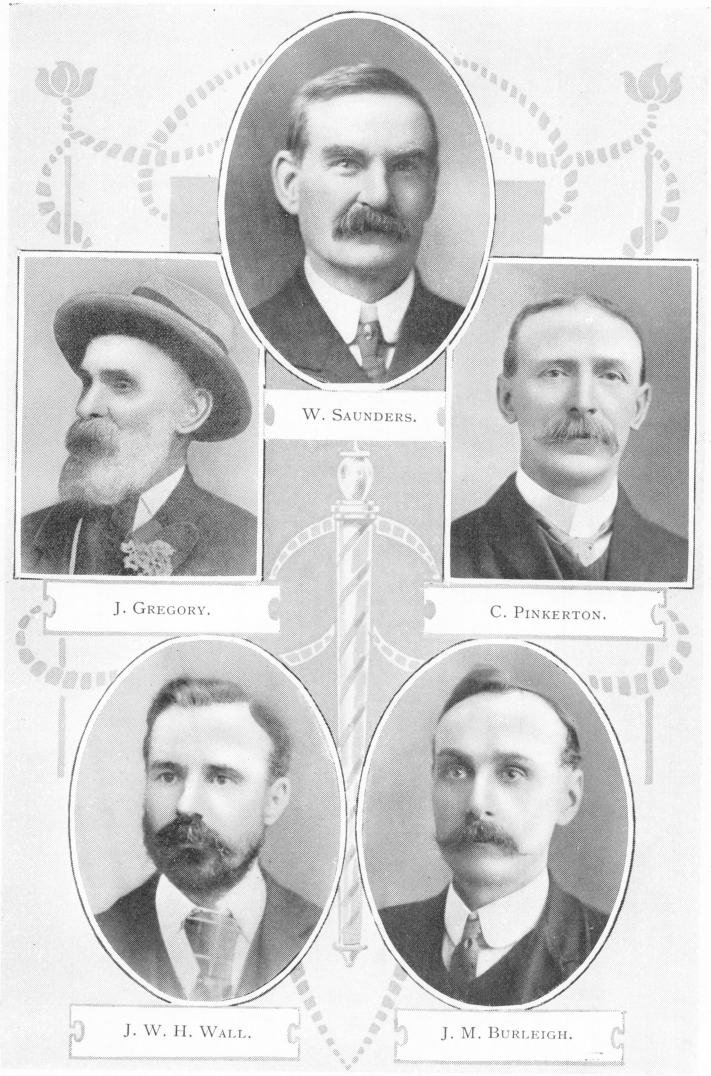
These folk were practical. They set about doing something. With a few pounds of capital, scraped together among themselves, and supplemented by contributions from a few outside sympathisers, they started work in Mr. Gregory's house, a room being reserved for the Society at a rent of 3s. per week. From the first

they appear to have received but a doubtful welcome into the Co-operative movement, Mr. John Gregory giving vent to his feelings in characteristic fashion in his short account of the Society's brief history for the Congress Guide of 1893.

> In the factory (where the idea of a Productive Society originated) the first few shillings towards purchasing shares were paid. But trade became bad and shillings scarce, and when the birth time of the babe came it was much like that of a half-starved mother. Some of our local Co-operators looking on it said in their hearts: "Woe to it, it has no right to be born," and instead of looking at it with kind eyes turned away from it coldly, saying: "We will have no dealings with it."

For three years the Society struggled on in its little workshop, and then in 1893, becoming ambitious or desperate, perhaps both, a move was made to a shop fronting Pennywell Road. This was its undoing, for not only did the heavier rent, about 10s. per week, cripple its trading facilities, but the premises were broken into twice, and the last time practically the whole of its stock was cleared off.

Like the Bristol Pioneers, the Bristol Manufacturing Boot and Shoe Society was always hampered for lack of sufficient capital to place it on an equal footing with larger concerns. It could only secure trade from the most shaky of tradesmen—indeed, it is said that the final crash came through one of its customers becoming a bankrupt. But many of those who incurred debts with the Society never paid them, and in 1894 it was deemed advisable to wind it up. It is to the honour of Mr. John Gregory and his comrades that not a single creditor lost anything through the failure of the Society which they had brought into being. It is interesting to note that the Mr. John Gregory here spoken of is he who has been hailed as Bristol's cobbler poet. Two of his volumes, "My Garden" and "Murmurs and Melodies," have been favourably received by lovers of genuine poetry. Mr. Gregory is even now a well-known figure in Bristol labour circles, but, although his enthusiasm for social righteousness



LEADERS OF BRISTOL PRODUCTIVE SOCIETIES.

has in no way abated, he now walks with feeble steps. One of the last of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's gracious acts was to bestow a civil pension upon this old veteran.

Singularly enough, another cobbler poet has been mentioned in these pages. Mr. J. W. H. Wall, the erstwhile Secretary of the Bristol Pioneers' Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Society, also one of the pioneers and the first Secretary of the Bristol and District, has wooed the muse, though for the greater part he has guarded his beloved work with jealous care, and much has yet to be revealed. Over the pen-name of "Mervyn Dauncey" a few sonnets and songs have appeared here and there; but the song of his life has yet to be sung.

From a purely trading standpoint, perhaps, the Bristol Pianoforte Manufacturing Society may be regarded as having been the most successful of those attempts which have been made to establish associations of producers in Bristol. It was registered on June 8th, 1893, and the signatories to the rules were Messrs. William Nicholls, Alfred Mickleburgh, Francis Gilmore Barnett, John Brown, John D. Griffiths, Samuel Waltham Pritchett, Frederick Smith, J. W. H. Wall, and William Collard (Secretary).

It was Mr. F. Gilmore Barnett who inspired the movement. For some three years prior to the establishment of the Society, Mr. Mickleburgh, with two of his fellow workers, had been carrying on with varying success a pianoforte manufacturing business which they had bought from their late employer, Mr. Philip John Smith, of Park Row. With a view to improving their business, Mr. Barnett recommended them to join with others and transform the affair into a Productive Society. This was agreed upon, some well-known Bristol Co-operators were approached, and a Society was registered in due course. Amongst those who took an active part in its history, besides those already mentioned, were Messrs. W. Saunders (Chairman for the greater part of the time),

E. Bragg, C. A. Poole, Newton E. Smith, and C. Pinkerton, the last named for a long time acting as Secretary.

Practically the whole of the capital was subscribed by five individuals, and at least one-half of the whole amount was held by two of these five. The share holding of the members outside of these was a negligible quantity, much of it not fully paid up. Three of these five individuals were workers, and two of them acted at various times as Manager.

The business was conducted partly upon a cash, and partly upon a hire-purchase system. A contract was secured from the Bristol School Board, and several instruments supplied, but the greater part of the trade done was with individuals on the hire-purchase principle. This necessitated a larger capital than the Society was ever able to command, and when, in 1902, upon a change being made in the management, one of the important loanholders began to press for repayment, the Society sensibly declined. Not the least of the Society's difficulties was that of making such arrangements in its individual transactions as to avoid giving offence to the distributive Societies of which their customers were members; and some of their "deals" had the effect of alienating Co-operative sympathy in consequence.

From 1902 onwards the loanholder before referred to sat on the Committee, and, from time to time, expressed his dissatisfaction with the management, but did not prevail on his colleagues to make any change. But early in 1906 rumours were current that another and competitive business, which might be detrimental to the Society, was being organised by ex-employés, and, to end what was likely to become an acute controversy, the Committee accepted the offer of their Manager, Mr. Mickleburgh, to buy out the other shareholders at 20s. in the £. Thus by the end of 1906 the Bristol Co-operative Pianoforte Productive Society Limited had ceased to exist.

The latest attempt to establish this type of Co-operative enterprise in Bristol is still in its initial stages. The

Bristol Printers Limited—for that is the name of the venture—was registered on June 4th, 1909, but the inauguration of the Society dates back to March, 1908.

The wages and conditions of workers in the printing and allied trades are worse in Bristol than in many large towns; and, for years, the advisability of setting up Co-operative workshops, if only for the purpose of dealing with the printing requirements of labour organisations, has been seriously discussed, but nobody was inclined to move in the matter.

Early in 1908 some workers among the printing firms thought that the time was ripe to sound labour organisations as to the wisdom of making a start. Accordingly, on March 21st, 1908, a meeting, convened by Mr. G. Phillips, was held at the Caxton Rooms. Amongst those present were representatives from the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employés, the Bristol Socialist Society, and the Warehousemen and Cutters' Union. The Bristol Co-operative Society had been invited, but did not send a delegate.

At this meeting a Preliminary Committee was formed to formulate rules, and generally to work up enthusiasm for the project in labour circles. This Committee consisted, amongst others, of Messrs. A. F. Read, J. M. Burleigh, T. Hill, K. Parnall, J. Hardstaff, and A. J. Cunnington, with Mr. Phillips as Secretary.

Though no resolution to that effect was submitted, the Society may be said to have started from that meeting.

Communication was opened up with the Labour Copartnership Association, who gave some practical advice in the framing of rules; further, a member of that Association became a shareholder in the concern.

The Model Rules of the Labour Copartnership Association were taken as a basis, and the constitution of the Society proceeded on lines approximating to the following:—

The objects of the Society were stated to be: "To carry on the industries, businesses, and trades of printers,

lithographers, stationers, bookbinders, publishers, paper merchants, and dealers, in all their branches, both wholesale and retail."

Capital was to be raised, in the first place, by shares, to the nominal value of £1. These were to be called ordinary shares. Each employé earning over £1 per week had to accumulate shares in the Society equal to his wages for six months, or at least £50. The interest on ordinary shares was to be 5 per cent, cumulative.

It was proposed to create another kind of share, called accumulated shares. These were of the nominal value of 1d., and would be brought into being so soon as the business began to show a profit. According to circumstances, there might be awarded to the Committee, for services rendered, 10 per cent of the net profits; and a like amount among shareholders, in addition to their ordinary interest; and up to 50 per cent among the employés in proportion to their wages.

No withdrawals were to be permitted from these shares until the recipient accumulated £20. Meanwhile, they might be utilised to pay interest upon ordinary shares, or generally to make good any losses in trade, even to the extent of being themselves extinguished.

The management of the Society was vested in a Committee consisting of a President, Secretary, Manager, and seven Committee-men. Of these, the employés were permitted to elect four. They could please themselves as to whether they chose an employé; but no person was eligible for the Committee who had not at least five fully paid-up shares in the Society.

Many meetings were held before the special rules could be completed. In the meantime, trade unions, friendly societies, and other organisations were canvassed for capital and prospective support of trade. The results were by no means encouraging, but the Committee did not lose heart. They went on perfecting their constitution with steady persistence. It was calculated that at least

£620 would be required to make an effective start, and it was hoped that the Bristol Co-operative Society would help to find a considerable portion of this.

The first Ordinary General Meeting was held on July 24th, 1909, when a Committee of Management was elected, with Mr. J. M. Burleigh as Secretary and Mr. J. Hardstaff as Treasurer. Mr. S. C. Pope was elected as one of the Auditors. At a later date Mr. Pope was added to the Committee, Mr. Storey taking his place as Auditor.

As soon as practicable the Society became affiliated to the Co-operative Union Limited and the Bristol and Somerset Co-operative Association.

The Society was embarrassed considerably in the early stages through the difficulty they had in obtaining sufficient capital. Most of the members were eager to make a start, but curbed their impatience, hoping to persuade some of the trade organisations to take up shares. But their hopes were never realised, and when, on September 24th, 1909, a printing plant was offered them at 41, Castle Street, the members thought they might do worse than make a humble start. This plant was secured on easy terms for £80, and an overdraft of £70 arranged with Messrs. Stuckey's Banking Co., upon the personal security of the Committee severally and jointly, enabled the Society to announce the fact that they were open for business.

Meanwhile, the doings of these working men had begun to disturb the serenity of the owner of one of the largest printing works in Bristol, where some of these would-be Co-operative printers were employed. On October 13th, 1909, the Secretary called a special meeting of the Committee to report that the President and himself had been discharged from their employment by reason of their connection with the Society, and that several Committee-men had been called upon to give up their connection with the Bristol Printers Limited or be discharged from their berths. These members, including the President, immediately resigned from the Society. It

was thereupon resolved to instal the Secretary in the works, and let him canvass for orders with a view to building up a connection.

The action of this firm, paltry as it may seem, was quite logical from a competitive standpoint, although, had these employés invested their money in, say, brewery shares, or any ordinary joint-stock concern, it is doubtful whether any notice would have been taken. The plain fact is that the workers must not presume to enter the domain of their masters unless they are prepared to face penalty and pain. The individualist who exists to compete shrinks from a competition of higher order than his own.

The operations of the Society were undoubtedly quickened as the result of this printer's action. Appeals for trade and capital were again made to labour organisations and others, but again the results were disappointing. The first half-yearly balance sheet, issued in January, 1910, disclosed a shareholding of £76. 3s., subscribed by thirty-six members. A trade of £54 had been done, resulting in a net loss of £13. 2s. 11d., after allowing £2. 11s. 4d. for depreciation upon plant and fixtures.

Further appeals were made for capital, with more success. The Bristol Co-operative Society responded with an investment of £50, and, later, the Typographical Association followed with an investment of £25.

The second half-year's balance sheet was considerably more promising, share and loan investments amounting to £177. 17s., and the trade for the period had increased to £172. 19s. 9d. A small loss of £6. 11s. 4d. had been made—this after allowing for depreciation of plant and fixtures to the extent of £5. 2s. 8d.

In their report the Committee stated that—

> Owing to certain administrative changes the Bank overdraft was called in, and your Committee have shown their confidence in the future of the Bristol Printers by meeting this call to the extent of nearly £50.

The leaders of this Society are very optimistic as to the future, and it may be that the experience of the past in respect to Associations of Producers in Bristol will make the success of this effort possible. Apart from the paucity of capital, and generally its limited resources in respect to plant, its fair wages and hours (48 per week) conditions handicap the Society in competition with other houses. But when this is fully realised by the general body of Bristol workers it is not unreasonable to suppose that their enthusiasm for a worthy cause will rally them to the help of their brethren.



BRISTOL PIONEERS' BOOT AND SHOE MANUFACTURING SOCIETY.

Half Year Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.					Assets.					
		Share.	Loans, including Bank Ov'rdraft.	Acco'nts Owing by Society.	Reserve.	Mortgage.	Value of Stock.	Land and Buildings	Value of Machinery and Fixed Stock.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods to Society.	Bank and Cash in hand.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mar., 1890...	33	108	283	189	...	...	201	...	72	...	266	13
Sept., 1890...	47	154	285	279	...	...	256	...	85	...	378	22
May, 1891...	73	346	403	193	2	...	411	...	111	...	346	52
Dec., 1891...	77	394	433	284	...	...	449	...	107	50	450	56
June, 1892...	78	408	438	386	...	380	537	382	117	...	492	46
Dec., 1892...	78	413	441	354	...	388	452	396	129	35	523	58
June, 1893...	57	419	442	519	...	387	458	423	122	...	509	100
Dec., 1893...	...	407	441	296	...	386	297	423	120	...	458	15
June, 1894...	...	409	444	437	...	392	290	423	121	...	584	98
Dec., 1894...	64	412	420	462	...	399	266	423	130	74	617	74
June, 1895...	...	410	420	444	...	412	242	423	125	...	594	94
Dec., 1895...	64	405	*446	472	...	412	203	423	142	...	669	‡58
June, 1896...	...	399	*492	494	...	386	245	423	136	...	591	‡95
Dec., 1896...	59	383	386	454	...	379	174	423	131	422	483	54
Year ended												
†1897	56	391	1230	...	...	...	240	*541	...	...	...	...
†1898	16	15	1330	...	...	...	221	§550	...	...	...	...
†1899	19	40	1542	...	...	...	301	§536	...	...	...	...
†1900	21	82	1806	...	...	...	444	§529	...	...	...	...
†1901	21	81	2282	...	...	...	401	§572	...	369	...	...

* Bank Overdraft included.
† From Registrar's Returns.
‡ Overdraft.
§ Includes Machinery and Fixed Stock.

Half Year Ended	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Depreciation of Land, Buildings, and Fixtures.	Loss.			
				Net.	Interest on Capital.	Loss to Date.	Shareholders' Interest given back to Society.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mar., 1890...	346	815	3	28	4	...	...
Sept., 1890...	638	1671	4	*47	8	...	...
May, 1891...	1034	2634	6	23	17	...	...
Dec., 1891...	822	1953	5	24	21	...	...
June, 1892...	734	1786	5	†10	20	...	...
Dec., 1892...	645	1586	6	37	11	...	...
June, 1893...	629	1452	7	146	11	146	...
Dec., 1893...	487	1217	7	84	11	210	...
June, 1894...	546	1418	6	†31	6	152	...
Dec., 1894...	506	1327	6	18	6	170	...
June, 1895...	489	1277	6	5	6	175	...
Dec., 1895...	544	1383	2	97	...	246	26
June, 1896...	501	1269	7	75	...	†368	20
Dec., 1896...	470	1267	7	†29	3	338	...
Year ended							
‡1897.....	...	2460	...	...	...	...	...
‡1898	...	2239	...	...	...	...	...
‡1899	...	2641	...	...	...	...	...
‡1900	...	2547	...	...	...	...	...
‡1901	...	2773	...	...	...	...	...

* Profit.

† Errors account for £37 further loss.

‡ Registrar's Returns.

BRISTOL PIANOFORTE MANUFACTURING SOCIETY.

ESTABLISHED JUNE 8TH, 1893.

Year Ended	No. of Members.	Liabilities.				Assets.				No. of Employees.	Wages and Salaries.	Sales.	Profits.	Net Profit.	
		Share.	Loans, including Bank Overdraft.	Accounts Owing.	Reserve.	Value of Stock.	Land, Buildings, Machinery, and Fixed Stock.	Other Investments.	Owing for Goods.					Capital.	
														Rate per cent.	Amount.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£		£	£	£		£
1894	15	381	1011	...	4	982	58	...	...	...	...	480	45	5	35
1895	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1896	16	362	963	64	...	1233	50	12	114	...	178	868	...	...	...
1897	15	358	949	112	...	911	...	103	731	5	346	750	142	...	...
1898	18	360	983	99	...	688	40	116	888	7	370	900	60	...	50
1899	16	360	1400	47	43	586	32	206	885	6	428	1089	138	...	67
1900	15	360	780	81	41	536	28	189	728	7	250	1161	118	...	67
1901	15	382	789	78	66	670	...	31	336	6	477	1040	70	...	18
1902	15	362	784	...	57	648	5	...	898	6	471	1081	86	...	55
1903	16	363	774	...	101	573	...	...	1023	6	497	1403	83	...	18
1904	15	363	773	...	104	701	...	...	863	6	582	1118	99	...	18
1905	11	348	771	...	302	620	...	45	841	5	505	1248	*80	...	17

* Loss.

CHAPTER VII.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd.

THE history of Wholesale Co-operative trading in England is one of absorbing interest, besides being intensely instructive. The present magnitude of the operations of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, familiarly styled the C.W.S., is a tribute to the inherent power of Co-operation to achieve a very large measure of commercial success, while the manifold branches of industry covered by those operations testify to the organising ability of the working classes, and leave no room to doubt that, in the change which is taking place from an individualistic to a collectivist system everywhere, the right men will eventually be found in the right place. Co-operators have clearly demonstrated, in the vast network of organisation which this huge business has become, that it is possible to dispense with the multi-millionaire managing-director or captain of industry—that it is possible to succeed commercially by giving free play to the intelligence of the rank and file, and from these to evolve our own captains, under effective control.

The need for a central purchasing and distributing agency was felt in the early days of the first Co-operative movement—that usually associated with Dr. King, of Brighton, and which, after a meteoric display in the 'thirties, fizzled out in the 'forties of the last century. These Union shops, as they were called, did attempt to start a Wholesale Society in 1835, but it was a failure, largely owing to the legal barriers which then impeded the free action of all Co-operative Societies.

Subsequent attempts to establish wholesale centres were made in 1850 by the Christian Socialists in London, and in 1852 by the Rochdale Pioneers, but without success. By a competent observer it was considered that these efforts failed by reason of their being too soon in the order of Co-operative development.

The North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited was registered in August, 1863, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1862, and started business in Manchester in 1864. The chief points in the constitution were the following: (1) That ready-money dealings be strictly adhered to; (2) That none but Co-operative Societies should be allowed to join; (3) That each Store should pledge itself to deal exclusively in those articles supplied by the Society; (4) That a small percentage be charged on the amount of business done; (5) That the capital be raised *pro rata* upon the number of members belonging to the Society; (6) That Stores pay their own carriage. Nos. 3 and 4 were found to be impracticable, and were therefore dropped, otherwise this basis of constitution has remained practically unchanged till now; but in 1873 the name was changed to the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited. It was partially in self-defence that the Co-operative Societies combined for the purpose of forming their own Wholesale; but, as is usual when intelligent individuals are brought together for a common purpose, ideals are developed which could have no chance of expression from isolated units. Thus it was quickly placed on record that the federation had a purpose beyond the merely superficial one of buying goods and passing over to Societies at a percentage. The Directors of that day dipped into the future when they said that—

> By securing Societies against imposition in the days of their infancy and inexperience, and enabling them to purchase on more advantageous terms than the largest Societies have hitherto done, we shall secure the healthy extension and consolidation of our movement.

This ideal has been attained. Many a young Society has had occasion to be thankful for the existence of the C.W.S., though perhaps their ignorance and inexperience may have obscured the real value of services rendered at the time; and the extraordinary growth of the movement, corresponding in just measure to the growth of its federal institution, testifies to the instinctive insight of the promoters.

The rules by which the C.W.S. is governed have been altered from time to time as occasion required. At first the Board of Directors were selected from Societies in the North-West; but, as branches were opened at Newcastle-on-Tyne and London, Branch Committees were appointed, which regulated affairs in their own district, sending delegates to the General Committee sitting at Manchester. This General Committee dealt with finance, and had power of veto and general jurisdiction over the affairs of the whole, apportioning salaries, and dismissing officials.

In 1906 it was felt that the constitution stood in need of revision, and, as the result of the report of a Special Committee, the system was unified. Branch Committees were abolished, although district representation was still retained. In general, the constitution of the C.W.S. corresponds to that of the average retail Society, substituting Societies for individuals. Share capital is subscribed at the rate of four £5 shares for every twenty individual members, and each Society has delegate and voting power in the proportion of one for every 500 members. In practice, share capital is not deposited in one sum; Societies upon admission pay 1s. on each share, and allow their dividend upon purchases and interest upon capital to accumulate for the balance.

The Directors are, by agreement, nominated from the Societies in three districts, in the proportion of sixteen from Manchester and eight each from London and Newcastle, and voted upon by all the Societies in the federation.

Generally speaking, the powers of the Directors are the same as those exercised by the Committee of a retail Society. The actual business is in the hands of competent buyers at home and abroad, for the principle which governs all purchases is to get as near to the actual producer as possible. The Society's buyers are known and respected upon all the markets of the world, their methods of prompt payment being greatly appreciated, especially in foreign countries. At home, the federation has entered very energetically into the production of many goods which it sells.

To give a comprehensive idea of the business method adopted by the C.W.S., the following has been extracted from an article which appeared in the C.W.S. "Annual" for 1902, under the head of "The C.W.S. of To-day." Figures have, of course, been brought up to date:—

AS WHOLESALE MERCHANT AND BANKER.

The bulk of the general trade of the C.W.S. is done in goods bought by the Society's buyers at home and abroad, and distributed to the retail Societies from its warehouses, or, in the case of very large consignments of certain articles, sent direct to the retail Society from the manufacturer or port where landed. Large stocks are held in Manchester, Newcastle, and London in the grocery and provision, drapery, woollens, boot and shoe, and furnishing warehouses, from which the orders of Societies in these districts are executed. The stocks of bacon, hams, and canned goods from America are held in great warehouses at the ports of arrival, and on the receipt of orders at Manchester, Newcastle, or London the heavy orders are sent direct, while small and mixed orders would be executed from the local warehouses.

One general principle runs through all the purchasing done by C.W.S. buyers, namely, to go direct to the source of production, whether at home or abroad, so as to save the commissions of middlemen and agents. For some articles, such as tea, coffee, wool, leather, there is, of course, a definite market where the whole supply is put up to auction by brokers, and in such cases the C.W.S. buyer has to take his place with the rest of the world and bid for what he wants. The home buyers of the C.W.S. usually have samples offered to them by manufacturers, but in some branches of trade they have to visit special markets. The millinery buyer has to go to London and Paris at certain seasons. The buyer for dried fruit goes to Greece in the autumn, and thus secures the pick of the crop by calling on the largest growers and paying cash on delivery. When the grower delivers his fruit at one of the ports where the C.W.S. boats are waiting for cargo, and the fruit is checked with the sample for quality and weighed, the grower can take the C.W.S. draft straight to the nearest bank and go home with hard cash in his pocket. Only a season ago, through an error in weighing, the grower in Greece had given the C.W.S. a large quantity of fruit in excess of the amount stated and paid for. When the mistake was discovered in England by the C.W.S. a draft for the difference was at once forwarded, much to the surprise and satisfaction of the grower. In New York, Montreal, Sydney, N.S.W., Spain (Denia), Aarhus and Copenhagen in Denmark, Hamburg in Germany, Gothenburg in Sweden, the C.W.S. has purchasing depôts with resident buyers, whose office it is to purchase and ship home the productions of these countries as required by English Co-operators. On arrival in England the goods are divided among the warehouses at Manchester, Newcastle, London,

Liverpool, and Bristol. Samples are then placed on view in the various salerooms of the Wholesale at Manchester, Newcastle, London, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Huddersfield, Blackburn, Northampton, and Nottingham, so that buyers from the retail Societies can at once see them and place their orders.

. . . . . .

The total amount of the goods imported direct by the C.W.S. from foreign countries in the twelve months ended June, 1909, was £6,929,876. The chief items that go to make up this total are as follows:—

	£	
America	1,217,041	... Cheese, Bacon, Lard, Flour, and Canned Goods.
Australia	101,269	... Butter, Wheat, Tallow, Leather.
Austria	399,203	... Sugar, Flour, Fancy Goods.
Canada	316,735	... Cheese, Butter, Leather.
Denmark	3,570,611	... Butter, Bacon, Eggs.
France	102,867	... Sugar, Dried Fruit, Fancy Goods.
Germany	346,767	... Sugar, Butter, Eggs, Fancy Goods.
Greece and Turkey	218,110	... Dried Fruit.
Holland	148,032	... Rice, Cocoa, Cheese, Yeast, Margarine.
Sweden	407,621	... Butter, Eggs, Boxes.

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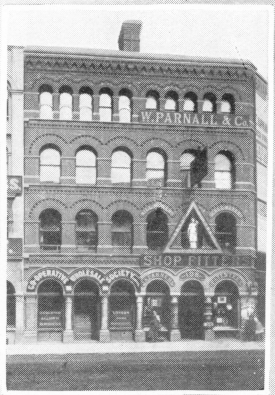
In order to expedite business and to save the ordinary banker's charges, which would be very large in the case of the money transactions of the C.W.S., a separate Banking Department was established. The cashier's department, in other words, gradually blossomed into a full-blown bank. In addition, however, to serving the C.W.S. in this capacity the bank has extended its operations, and now offers substantial advantages to the retail Societies who have placed their accounts with it. The scope and success of its work may be estimated from the following particulars: In the year 1909 the profits amounted to £34,000 on a turnover (deposits and withdrawals) of £124,749,781. The number of retail Societies having their accounts with it are 942. A number of trade unions, friendly societies, building societies, and productive Societies have placed their accounts with the bank.

The three main centres for purposes of distribution are Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and London, but there are depôts and salerooms dotted about in most of the business centres of the kingdom. The London Branch district, including all that portion of England and Wales south of a line drawn from King's Lynn in the east to

Pembroke Dock in the west, has, obviously, need for supplementary centres, and such are now established at Bristol, Cardiff, and Northampton. Of these the Bristol Depôt was the first to be established. Singularly enough, this synchronised with the start of the Bristol and District Society. As a matter of fact the conference of Societies which was held in the summer of 1884 to decide upon the step was attended by a few of the Bristol and District pioneers, as onlookers only, of course. They could not be expected to give pledges of trade to justify the C.W.S. Directors taking the step. That was left to older Societies such as Radstock and Gloucester.

As a result of this conference, in October, 1884, a small building was rented at 106, Victoria Street, with which, and a staff of six employés, a commencement was made to meet the requirements of Societies in the Western Counties and South Wales. Within a few years the rapid development of trade made it imperative that more accommodation should be secured. Accordingly, in June, 1888, a large warehouse in Christmas Street was leased. The formal opening took place on October 4th, 1888, when the late Mr. J. T. W. Mitchell, President of the C.W.S. for twenty-one years, and Mr. Geo. Hines (Ipswich) addressed a large gathering of delegates from all parts of the constituency. Across the river of years comes the voice of that venerable leader, as with face beaming with enthusiasm, and in a spirit of prophetic ardour, he foretold the growth of Co-operation, "when the West would blossom with Co-operative flowers, large bright, beautiful, fair to see, and when the hills and valleys of Wales would resound to the music of Co-operation." Amongst other speakers at the meeting Mr. J. F. Hopkins (Bedminster) urged the development of agriculture Co-operatively, the making of butter, and, generally, the application of Co-operative principles to the land question.

The hope of Western Co-operators at this time was that the Bristol Depôt might become a Branch, with a Committee elected from the district, as in London and Newcastle. During the years 1888–9 a strong agitation was set up to accomplish this; but the response from



VICTORIA STREET,
1884.

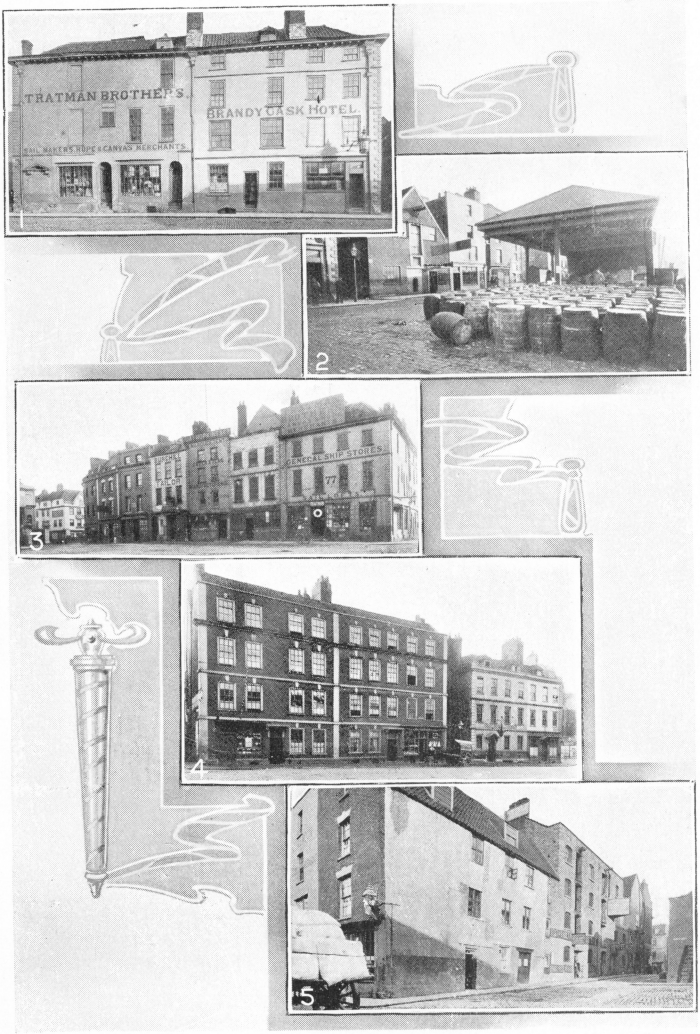


CHRISTMAS STREET,
1888.



BROAD QUAY, 1905.

OLD BUILDINGS ON SITE OF BROAD QUAY PREMISES.



1. West View. 2. South-West View. 3. North View.
4. East View. 5. South View.

other centres was not favourable, and the matter fell into abeyance. The question, however, was always an open one until the reorganisation of the Directorate in 1906, which effectually settled the point for ever.

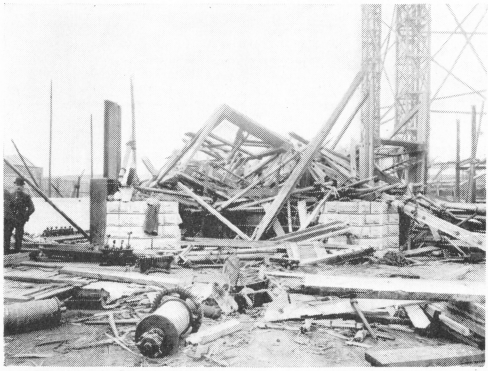
For several years the accommodation at Christmas Street proved sufficient, but from 1896 onwards increases in trade were so substantial that warehouse room became very much congested. Some relief was obtained when the adjoining premises were vacated and added to the main block. Further space was also gained by the removal of the bacon department to premises which had been specially adapted for the purpose on the Broad Quay. But between the years 1898 and 1905 it was with extreme difficulty, and at no little inconvenience to the staff, that business was carried on.

From 1897 onwards a close watch was kept on the property market with a view to securing a site whereon to build. In that year negotiations were actually opened up to purchase from the Corporation that property which was eventually secured on the Broad Quay, but the figure then suggested was prohibitive. The matter was reopened in September, 1899, and more reasonable offers were made, with the result that the southern half of the site was bought. A few months later the other half was also purchased. The whole site has a superficial area of 2,231 square yards. It is situated most favourably, practically in the heart of the city, and can be approached on all sides by road, upon the west side being the Broad Quay of the Bristol City Docks.

The buildings which occupied the ground at the time of purchase were very old, most of them dating back to the seventeenth century, and in some cases having doors and doorways apparently from a much earlier period. An old fireplace in the Goat and Armour public-house—one of five on the site—was dated 1667, and was in a good state of preservation. Its near neighbour, the Brandy Cask, was said to have a reputation that was world-wide. Shops and tenements took up the major portion of the space. In the latter, something like 240 persons were housed, who had to find other accommodation when in

January, 1902, it was decided to commence building operations.

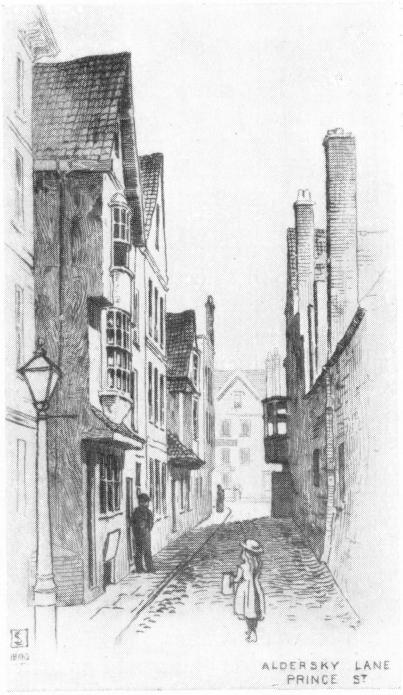
An improved building line was set out by the Corporation, necessitating a curved frontage to face Broad Quay and Princes Street. Upon excavating for the foundation it was found that for several feet below the surface there was nothing firmer than silted mud. Evidently the site was at one time either part of the river bed or bank. This supposition was confirmed by the find of a fifteenth century barque during the process of excavation.



COLLAPSE OF SCOTCH CRANE ON NEW BUILDING SITE, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1903.

In order, therefore, to place the buildings upon a solid foundation, the site had to be bored to a depth of about 50 feet, and large cement concrete piers were constructed, reaching down to the hard rock. The buildings which had stood for so many years above the ground were broken up to make a foundation for that which has taken their place. This piling process was long and tedious; but, when completed, the building operations were pushed forward and finished in less than three years. The work was carried out without serious mishap by the Society's building department, under the direction of their own architect, Mr. Harris, whose father was well known in Bristol labour circles in the 'sixties. An accident, which might have been attended with fatal results, occurred when, happily, but few people were about. During the night of September 10th, 1903, when high winds were

raging, the enormous derrick and staging, which, during the operations, were a wonder to the Bristolian, exposed, as they were, to the full blast of the storm, collapsed, and presented a mass of splinters and twisted iron wreckage to the astonished gaze of the early morning workmen. Fortunately, no one was hurt.



ALDERSKY LANE.

The premises consist of a basement and six floors above, the total height of the building from the street to the ridge of the roof being about 86 feet, and from the street to the top of the clock tower 130 feet. About two-thirds of the site was then covered by buildings, but the foundations and basement were laid for the whole, so that when the time comes for extension the work will be so far simplified.

One of the chief features is the formation, in the centre of the building, of a courtyard, roofed with glass. This answers two purposes—a loading way and a conductor of light. Access is obtained both from Broad Quay and from Princes Street by entrances large enough to take three lorries abreast. At the time the site was purchased this courtyard formed a dark, narrow passage between the two blocks of property, and went by the name of Aldersky Lane A closing order

was obtained from the Council, and thus disappeared one of the dirty bits of old Bristol, giving place to utility, sweetness, and light.

The principal entrance is surmounted by sculptured figures symbolic of two local industries, Mining and Agriculture.

Internally the construction of the building is fire-resisting, the columns being of iron, and the floors of steel girders, filled in with cement concrete, which is covered with pine flooring; but, to provide against the possibility of a serious fire, the building is fitted throughout with an installation of automatic fire sprinklers of the Grinnell pattern. In addition thereto, tanks, each containing six buckets of water, are provided on each floor. An amateur fire brigade of selected employés is trained and practised every week, so as to be available in case of emergencies.

No expense has been spared to make the premises thoroughly efficient in their commercial equipment, and comfortable and healthy for the workers. Electric fans to cool the air in summer, and a complete installation of regulated heating apparatus for winter use, make life tolerable during the routine of business hours. Well-appointed lavatories are placed on each floor, and air space is provided for each room on approved scientific principles.

The working hours are forty-four per week, and to all male employés of twenty-one years and upwards at least 24s. per week wages is paid. Those who desire may obtain dinner on the premises at a cost of 3d. for females and 6d. for males. On special occasions breakfast and tea are also supplied at a very moderate cost, the loss on this department being recognised as a legitimate expense to the Society. A capacious hall at the top of the building is frequently used by the employés, with the consent of the Directors, for recreative and educational purposes, during the winter. To encourage employés who are desirous of continuing their education at evening classes, but whose means will not permit of the necessary outlay, the Directors agree to pay the fees, provided two-thirds of the

possible attendances are made and the wage of the employé is not over 30s. per week.

From the youngest lad to the head of a department a fortnight's holiday, with pay, is granted every year.

All these provisions show that at the heart of the purely material and strictly commercial dealings of the federation there is also a feeling of responsibility towards the workers, such as is only to be found in most exceptional cases in the individualistic camp; and this is more to the credit of Co-operators, for it is certain that they have not yet realised the fact, as have individualists, that this policy is good business.

The latest development in this respect has been the formation of a thrift fund for provision in old age. There is no obligation on the part of the employé to join this fund, it is quite voluntary; but, having done so, only under exceptional circumstances can the sums deposited be withdrawn before the age of sixty is reached. The contributors may be classified into three divisions : (*a*) those who earn less than 30s. a week; (*b*) between 30s. and 40s.; (*c*) over 40s. Those belonging to class (*a*) contribute $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of their wages to the fund, which is supplemented by the Society by a like amount. Class (*b*) contributors have the option of depositing either $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, which is supplemented by a further $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Class (*c*) contribute $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent, and are credited with a further $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The fund is invested in the Society at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest, each member being credited with the proportion of the Society's contribution, with interest, every half year. The management of the fund is entrusted to a Joint Committee, six appointed by the Directorate, and five elected every three years from the employés, and these Committee-men are trustees for the fund, holding deeds as security for the money invested. The cost of maintaining this fund does not fall short of £10,000 annually, and with an ever-increasing staff the expense is sure to increase proportionately.

Out of its profits the C.W.S. contributes largely to charities in all the districts where it has employés working; and it is of special interest to know that

Co-operators have ever been ready to show practical sympathy towards those who are called upon to bear hardship and privation, whether from industrial or natural causes. From time to time the reserve funds of the C.W.S. have been utilised to a considerable extent for this purpose. Since 1897, to go no further back, no less a sum than £20,000 has been devoted to such causes at home and abroad, including the following:—1897: £3,000 to the relief of wives and children of locked-out engineers; 1898: £3,000 to wives and children of miners on strike in South Wales; 1901: £1,000 to the Indian famine fund; 1905: £500 to the sufferers in the Courriéres mining disaster; 1907: £500 to the Jamaica earthquake fund; 1908–9: £6,000 to the relief of distress generally at home; 1909: £1,000 each to the sufferers through the Wigan Colliery and the West Stanley Colliery disasters; £1,000 in cash and £1,000 value of clothing to the Messina earthquake sufferers.

Regular annual donations are made to hospitals and similar institutions where the C.W.S. have works or other places of business. Of late years there has been a great speeding-up in this respect. Whereas in 1903 the total amount so subscribed was £500, in 1909 it was £1,680. In addition to this, special grants have been made since 1903 amounting to over £9,000. The Bristol medical charities have benefited under both heads.

When, in 1896, the Roden estate was purchased for the purpose of growing fruit and vegetables, the question arose as to what use could be made of the mansion which also came into the possession of the Society. It was eventually decided to convert this into a Convalescent Home. Nearly £12,000 was spent to equip the Hall for this purpose, and since 1901 the Home has been maintained at a cost of from £800 to £1,000 annually. Grants in aid of similar institutions have been made from 1901 amounting to £5,255.

In the space of twelve years through the C.W.S. nearly £65,000 has been dispensed for purposes such as those enumerated above.

It is for such ideals as these that the Quayside buildings stand, and it is the spirit of associated effort, directed by men of earnest purpose, that has realised the ideal thus far.

The idea of producing the goods they sold was always present with the pioneers of the C.W.S., and in less than ten years from the start the manufacture of biscuits was entered upon at Crumpsall, near Manchester. This productive enterprise has been followed by others, at first slowly, but of late years at a greatly accelerated pace.

The manufacturing industries of the C.W.S. to-day include a large number of those goods which we regard as the common necessaries of life, the chief of which are enumerated below.

A List of Co-operative Productions.

Food, &c.—
- Bacon and Sausages.
- Biscuits and Confectionery of all kinds.
- Butter.
- Cocoa and Chocolate.
- Flour and Wheatmeal.
- Jams, Marmalade, and Bottled Fruits.
- Jellies.
- Lard.
- Peels, Candied.
- Pickles and Sauces.

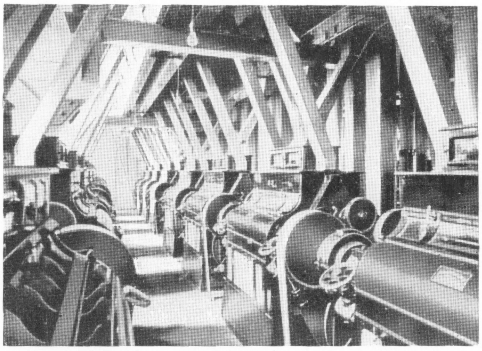
Clothing, &c.—
- Boots and Shoes.
- Cloth and Clothing.
- Corsets.
- Flannels.
- Hosiery.
- Linings.
- Mantles, &c.
- Shirts.
- Underclothing.

Other C.W.S. Productions—
- Bedsteads.
- Brushes and Brooms.
- Candles.
- Fenders and Curbs.
- Fireirons and Brasses.
- Furniture.
- Glycerine.
- Hardware.
- Mats.
- Mattresses.
- Night Lights.
- Polishes.
- Printing, Bookbinding, and Lithography.
- Soaps.
- Starch.
- Tinware.
- Tobacco, Cigars, and Cigarettes.
- Washing, Wringing, and Mangling Machines.
- All kinds of Sundry Drugs, &c.

The latest addition to the Productive Works is the Flour Mill at Avonmouth, erected for the convenience of Societies in the West; and it is interesting to note in this connection that Co-operators were the first to demonstrate

their faith in the Bristol Dock Extension, by the purchase of land upon which this mill has been placed.

The mill buildings are situated on the north side of a piece of land some three acres in extent, and, forming a portion of the Dock Estate, are held on a lease from the Corporation of Bristol. The land is bounded on the north, or front, by a road leading into the Royal Edward Dock; on the west side by the Corporation Granary and Warehouse, with sidings giving direct access from the quays into the Society's premises; and on the east side by the Great Western and Midland Railways, connected also by sidings to the Society's buildings.

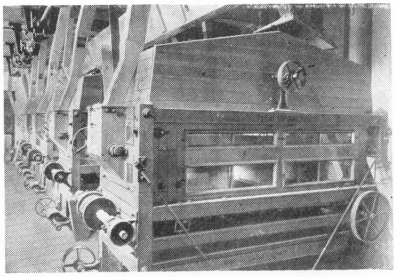


ROLLS.

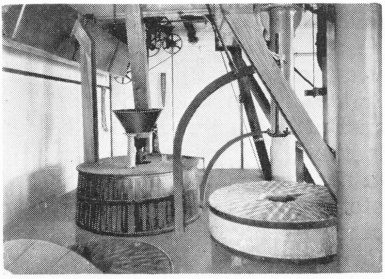
The mill is approached from the road through a gateway, on the right of which is situated the office buildings, having accommodation for the manager and office staff, with a kitchen and dining-room on the first floor. Through the mill yard at the farther end of the buildings is the grain receiving department, connected by means of an overhead gangway and conveyor with the Corporation Granary.

Adjoining the grain receiving department are wheat silos, consisting of forty bins, the majority of which are about 6 feet square and 64 feet deep. In these the wheat is stored after it has received its preliminary cleaning. Thence it is carried as required by means of elevators and band conveyors. Behind this building is the provender mill, and adjoining both is the wheat cleaning department. Here the wheat is washed, dried, and blended before passing into the mill. Crossing the rope race, in

which are situated the main drives from the engine to each floor, the flour mill is entered. This consists (like the cleaning department and provender mill) of a basement and four floors above. Here is situated the flour milling machinery, where the whole process of grinding, dressing, and finishing is carried on. Abutting on the end of the mill is the warehouse, a building of seven storeys, where the flour is packed and stored. From each storey run sack shoots, whereby the flour can be delivered from any floor into railway trucks or to vans in the yard. In the centre, at the rear of the mill, is situated the engine and boiler house, with chimney, also the mechanics' workshop and a messroom for the mill workmen. Above the rope race is a tower, containing a water tank of a capacity of 7,500 gallons, which supplies water to Grinnell sprinklers installed throughout the premises for the purposes of protection from fire. At each end of the main building are external fire-escape staircases, giving means of exit from each floor.



PURIFIERS.



STONER.

Water for wheat washing and other purposes is obtained from the Bristol Corporation main, and, for engine condensing, by means of a large iron main, direct from the dock.

The buildings are constructed substantially and suitably in red brickwork, with slated roofs and maple boarded floors. Ample windows are provided, so that each room is thoroughly well lighted. Each department is constructed of such dimensions as to suit the machinery, and so planned in relation one to the other as to allow of the whole process continuously proceeding, from the receiving of the wheat to the despatch of the finished product, without travelling over the same ground twice.

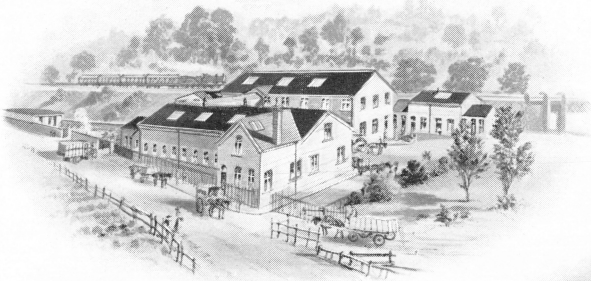
The buildings were erected by the Society's building staff, in accordance with plans prepared by, and under the supervision of, the Society's architect. The official opening of the mill took place on April 27th, 1910, when representatives from Societies in the West of England and South Wales attended in large numbers.

Following the opening ceremony by Mr. Wm. Lander, of Bolton (to whom a gold key was presented as a memento of the occasion), the delegates dined together in the Reception Hall at the docks.

Mr. John Shillito (Chairman of the C.W.S.) presided, and was supported by his colleagues of the C.W.S. Board and heads of departments, also by the Lord Mayor of Bristol and the Chairman of the Bristol Docks Committee. Speeches were made, and amongst those who took part in the proceedings was Mr. James Marks (Chairman of the Bristol Society), who asked the Societies to be loyal to the new Co-operative flour mills.

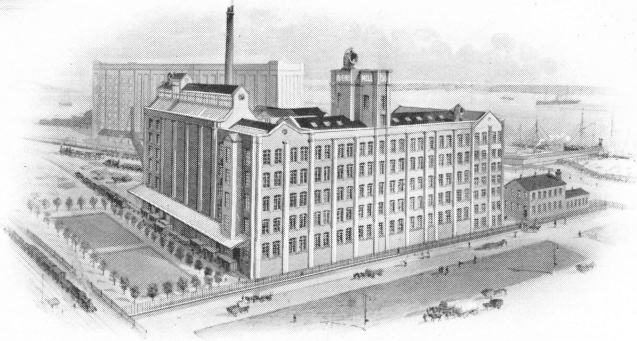
It was stated that the cost of the mills, including the purchase of the land, was estimated at £65,000.

Another semi-productive concern which must be named is the Brislington Butter Factory. This has an interesting history. At the opening of the Christmas Street premises in 1888 a note was sounded by Mr. J. F. Hopkins, of the Bedminster Society, which has rung down through the years ever since, voicing a sentiment which, if slowly, is none the less surely being recognised by Co-operators as a duty they owe to the community. He appealed for something to be done to develop the resources of the land. Having in mind the agriculturists in the West, he particularly referred to butter. Since that



C.W.S. BUTTER FACTORY,
BRISLINGTON.

C.W.S. FLOUR MILL,
AVONMOUTH.



time the C.W.S. has purchased estates for fruit growing and tea planting at home and in Ceylon, but Mr. Hopkins' ideal has not yet materialised.

In September, 1897, however, a small plot of land was purchased at Shillingstone in Dorset, and, for a time, expectations ran high among Western Co-operators that their C.W.S. was about to start a creamery for butter-making, but, in spite of these hopes, the matter was permitted to lapse.

In 1897 the Bedminster Society reopened the question by convening at Bristol a conference which eighteen delegates from ten Societies attended. A resolution was unanimously passed:—

> That in order to further extend and benefit our movement in this district, as well as to enable Societies already in existence to get their supplies from Co-operative sources, this conference of representatives of the counties of Somerset and Devon is of opinion that a creamery or creameries should be established in this part of the kingdom, at the earliest possible date, by our Co-operative Wholesale Society.

During the conference it was stated that a distinct promise had been made that a creamery in this district should be established if the milk of 1,500 cows could be guaranteed to the C.W.S. That creamery, however, has yet to be established.

Meanwhile, certain changes were taking place in the methods adopted to retail butter. The constant desire of the astute manufacturer or merchant is to market his wares in such a manner that the public will ignore his competitors and concentrate their entire purchasing powers in his direction. Many devices have been resorted to, so that the pressure of competition may be reduced to a minimum; but none have been more successful than that of specialising, either by means of fancy names, or fancy packages, and plentiful advertising. This method has the merit of creating standards; and, speaking generally, those goods which maintain a uniformity either in price or quality, or both, have the best chance of holding the public favour. Twenty years ago uniformity of flavour and texture in butter from week to week were by no means guaranteed to purchasers, even from the best of

provision dealers; and it was only following in the wake of large manufacturers, and dealers in other commodities, that some smart business men in the West began to specialise in 1lb. and ½lb. tablets of butter.

Factories sprang into existence around the best dairying centres in Somerset, Dorset, and Devon. Supplies of butter were drawn from local farmers, and, supplemented by Irish or Colonial produce, blended into uniformly mild and regular texture, packed up neatly in ½lb. and 1lb. wrappers, and marketed under an appropriate brand. It was never claimed that these factories turned out nothing but English butter, though it is more than probable that the brands utilised, and the fact that the butter seemed to originate from dairy-producing counties, misled a large number of people into imagining that such was the case. This may have helped the business at first; but that which would have popularised tablet butter apart from this was the fact that the public taste was being catered for as it had not been before. What the tea blenders had done for teas, these butter blenders were doing for butter. At first, Co-operators were not inclined to favour this trade. There appeared to be too much chance of misunderstanding. True, the demand for this produce forced them to sell it; but for some years, in spite of the growing popularity for tablet butter, the C.W.S. would do nothing to take the business into their own hands. Not until it was generally understood that such manipulated produce might not be entirely English-made did the Directors make a move.

Having decided to do so, it was at first thought that the site at Shillingstone might be brought into use; but, upon mature consideration, it was felt that proximity to a port of entry for Colonial and Argentine butter was at least as important as nearness to English farmers. Accordingly, in 1904, a piece of land, three-quarters of an acre in extent, was bought at Brislington, near Bristol, for £750, and tenders were invited for the erection of a factory, the Society's own building department being too busy to take the work in hand. Messrs. Cowlin and Co. secured the contract, and worked to the design of the Society's own

architect. The factory was opened for work on June 20th, 1904, having cost, for building, £2,320, and fixtures and machinery, £1,480. A few details concerning the building may be of interest.

From the first it was taken into consideration that the factory would have to be constructed to provide for development. The main building is rectangular in shape, and occupies roughly an area of 4,000 feet super. The stables and supplementary buildings are set back from the main portion to allow room for extensions. These extensions have now taken place. The arrangements are such that supplies are received at one end of the factory, blended as they pass through, and delivered at the other end. The factory is fitted with an excellent installation of cold storage. Other appliances include horizontal 84in. Douglas butter blenders, which have a large daily capacity. Over these there has been constructed a large insulated cold water tank, enabling water at 40° Fahr. to be run over the butter as it is blended. The hardening effect is, of course, instantaneous, and the grain of the butter is thereby maintained, and its keeping qualities are augmented. The complete up-to-date mechanical and scientific equipment makes the factory the best of its kind in England.

It is constantly being urged upon Co-operators that they should be loyal to their own institutions. Were all those connected with Co-operative Societies Co-operators by conviction there would be little need for such plea. But they are not; and, except to a limited extent, those who are have not sufficient faith in themselves to insist upon Co-operative shops being stocked solely with Co-operatively-produced goods. An attempt to form an amalgamation of soap manufacturers in England during 1906 roused the Co-operative world to action, and amongst others the Bristol Society ceased forthwith to stock any other soap than that made by the C.W.S. The success which has attended this experiment leads one to suppose that similar action in other directions may follow. For, notwithstanding their frequent criticisms, Bristol Co-operators are fully alive to the influence which their federal

institution is having upon the world of industry; and, intent upon making this influence more and more effective from a labour standpoint, they let no opportunity slip which is likely to make for a more complete Co-operation. There are other considerations which also weigh, as Miss Beatrice Potter (Mrs. Sidney Webb) has so truly said:—

> Loyalty to the central institution is nevertheless an all-important motive with upright officials and high-minded Committee-men; but these motives are strengthened and confirmed by the self-protecting instinct of the rank and file of customer-members, glad of a guarantee that sinister influence shall have no effect on the quality and the price of the goods they consume.

But the chief and ever-present fact which has influenced the rank and file of Bristol Co-operators towards their federal institution is undoubtedly that the conditions of labour at C.W.S. centres and factories have been above reproach, and that understanding has made for loyalty.

It is important to note that production and distribution by the C.W.S. has, in a very real sense, realised the ideal of Robert Owen—the elimination of profit upon cost price.

Quoting again from the article already referred to:—

> When you see Co-operators manufacturing jam in a factory owned and controlled by themselves, and then distributing and consuming the jam, where is the " buyer " and where the " seller " corresponding to the manufacturer, the grocer, and to the customer of the world at large? When a Co-operator uses for his Christmas puddings currants " bought " from his local Society, to whom they were " sold " by the C.W.S., who in turn " bought " them from a Greek farmer, what man with a habit of clear thinking and a notion of the real things behind words can help seeing that the article is bought only once, and the subsequent transactions are merely dummy ones? The Co-operator buys also labour from his employés in his local Store and also in the C.W.S. The notion of profit arising from a system of buying to sell again, buying in the cheapest market to sell in the dearest, has no place in his life.
>
> While considering the present state of Co-operative production as carried on by the C.W.S. certain general facts must be noticed. Co-operators have undertaken production solely to supply certain of their own needs. The goods made by the C.W.S. are made not to be sold for profit but to be consumed by the proprietors of the factories where they are produced. Though one hears of C.W.S. goods being bought and sold, and of profits made on them, it is of the utmost importance in studying certain aspects of C.W.S.

production to remember that neither in the C.W.S. nor in the distributive Store are the goods " sold " to the members at a " profit " as we understand these terms in the world of competitive trade. When the C.W.S. sends boots made at Leicester to a Society, and the latter hands them to a member, there is no " sale " in the economic sense, but merely a process of distribution. The man who gets the boots, being the owner of the C.W.S. factory, the C.W.S. warehouse, and his local Store, was really the principal in the transactions where the leather was bought and the labour hired for putting it together. He deposited a sum represented by his share capital with certain agents or employés of his who undertake to supply him with a pair of boots when he wants them. When he takes the pair of boots from his local Store he reduces the amount of his deposit with these agents by the value of the boots, and his payment when he obtains them is really making up that deposit to what it was before with a small sum added which at the quarter end he may either withdraw or allow to remain in their hands. That he should choose to call his payment at the time of taking the boots the " price " of them, his taking them the " buying " of them, and the extra sum added to his deposit account with his employés the " profit " on them, should not be allowed to mislead us as to the real nature of the transactions involved.

The Bristol Societies of the later period have all been members of the federation. Bedminster took up six shares on September 13th, 1884, and Bristol and District five on March 7th, 1885, which have been increased as membership has increased. The Bristol Societies have taken their part in moulding the policy of the institution, and on the whole have loyally supported the federation with their trade. Their purchases will compare very favourably with the remainder of the Societies in the counties of Somerset and Gloucester.

CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LIMITED.

STATEMENT SHOWING PARTICULARS OF TRADING BY BRISTOL SOCIETIES.

Year.	Total C.W.S. Trade.	Total Bristol Depôt Trade.	TRADE OF BRISTOL SOCIETIES WITH C.W.S.					Percentage of Bristol Depôt Trade from Local Societies, *i.e.* Column 8 on Column 3.	Approximate Purchases of Bristol Societies possible from C.W.S., *i.e.* Total Sales, *Less* ¼.	Percentage of Total Purchases from C.W.S.
			Bristol and District.	Bedminster.	Keynsham.	Shirehampton and Avonmouth.	Total.			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£		£	
1883	4,546,889	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1884 (53 weeks)..	4,675,371	*12,206	*76	†376	...	...	452	...	1,495	30·2
1885	4,793,151	72,143	591	1,322	...	...	1,913	2·6	1,911	100
1886	5,223,179	94,476	997	1,321	...	...	2,318	2·4	3,301	70·2
1887	5,713,235	123,126	2,752	2,871	...	...	5,623	4·5	8,176	60·8
1888	6,200,074	146,519	2,470	3,998	...	...	6,468	4·4	10,130	63·3
1889 (53 weeks)..	7,028,944	203,115	3,460	4,126	...	...	7,586	3·7	12,625	60
1890	7,429,073	240,262	4,026	4,655	...	...	8,681	3·6	13,873	62·6

1891	8,766,430	339,955	4,819	4,975	...	...	9,794	2·8	18,828	52
1892	9,300,904	410,994	5,255	6,866	...	†600	12,721	3·0	21,158	60·1
1893	9,526,167	407,894	7,358	6,452	...	1,348	15,158	3·7	22,834	66·3
1894	9,443,938	336,180	7,295	7,837	*72	1,554	16,758	4·9	25,616	65·4
1895 (53 weeks)..	10,141,917	326,944	9,523	10,468	342	1,799	22,132	6·7	33,143	66·1
1896	11,115,056	358,187	14,353	14,835	338	2,252	31,778	8·8	46,128	68·8
1897	11,920,143	366,201	19,510	16,898	437	2,884	39,729	10·8	59,094	67·3
1898	12,574,748	389,688	25,905	21,984	362	3,160	51,411	13·1	74,350	69·1
1899	14,212,375	451,563	29,915	22,402	447	3,149	55,913	12·3	72,535	77
1900	16,043,889	484,427	34,435	21,342	468	2,890	59,135	12·2	75,887	77·8
1901 (53 weeks)..	17,642,082	548,535	43,680	23,409	508	3,341	70,938	12·9	86,420	82·8
1902	18,397,559	603,229	57,739	21,346	551	5,168	84,804	14·0	101,308	83·7
1903	19,333,142	669,682	60,278	21,723	593	6,891	89,485	13·3	110,752	80·8
1904	19,809,196	724,867	76,616	22,799	515	4,308	104,238	14·3	126,751	82·2
1905	20,785,469	772,876	104,626	13,600	219	827	119,272	15·4	146,172	81·5
1906	22,510,035	922,785	‡112,149	‡	‡	‡	112,149	12·1	142,420	78·7
1907 (53 weeks)..	24,786,568	1,053,919	116,852	...	...	...	116,852	11	160,408	72·8
1908	24,902,842	1,102,530	117,671	...	...	...	117,671	10·6	163,119	72·1
1909	25,675,938	1,152,788	135,905	...	...	...	135,905	11·7	174,914	77·7

* 13 Weeks only.
† Half Year only.
‡ Bristol Society formed by amalgamation.

CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LIMITED.

PROGRESS FROM COMMENCEMENT, IN MARCH, 1864, TO DECEMBER, 1909.

(From C.W.S. "Annual," by permission.)

YEAR ENDED	Net Sales.	Comparison with corresponding period previous year. Increase.	Comparison with corresponding period previous year. Rate per cent.	Distributive Expenses. Amount.	Distributive Expenses. Rate on Sales. Per £	Distributive Expenses. Rate on Sales. Per £100.	Net Profit.	Average Dividend paid per £.	Additions to Trade Dept. ††Reserve Fund.	Additions to Trade Dept. ††Insurance Fund.	Dates Departments and Branches were commenced.
	£	£		£	d.	s. d.	£	d.	£	£	
Oct., 1864 (30 wks.)	51,857	..	..	347	1 3/4	13 4 1/2	267	1 1/2	..	..	
,, 1865	120,754	..	..	906	1 1/4	15 0	1,858	3 1/2	..	..	
,, 1886	175,489	54 735	45 1/4	1,615	2 1/8	18 4 3/4	2,310	3	234	..	Tipperary.
Jan., 1868 (65 wks.)	331,744	112,688	51 1/8	3,135	2 1/4	18 10 1/4	4,111	3	450	..	
,, 1869	412,240	124,063	43	3,338	1 1/8	16 2 1/4	4,862	2 3/4	416	..	Kilmallock.
,, 1870	507,217	94,977	23	4.644	2 1/8	18 3 1/2	4,248	1 3/4	542	..	Limerick.
,, 1871 (53 wks.)	677,734	159,379	30 3/4	5.583	1 7/8	16 5 3/8	7,626	2 1/4	1,620	..	
,, 1872	758,764	86 559	12 5/8	6.853	2 1/8	18 0 3/8	7 867	2 1/4	1,020	..	Newcastle, Bank.
,, 1873	1,153,132	394,368	51 1/8	12,811	2 3/8	22 2 3/8	11,116	2 1/4	1,243	..	Manchester Boot and Shoe, Crumpsall.
,, 1874	1,636,950	483,818	41 7/8	21,147	3	25 10	14,233	2	922	..	Armagh, Manchester Drapery, Leicester, Cheshire, Waterford, Clonmel.
,, 1875	1,964,829	327.879	20	28,436	3 3/8	28 11 1/4	20,684	2	4,461	..	London, Tralee, Durham.
,, 1876	2,247,395	282,566	14 3/8	31,555	3 3/8	28 0 7/8	26,750	2 3/8	4,826	..	Liverpool.
,, 1877 (53 wks.)	2,697,366	401,095	17 1/2	42,436	3 1/2	31 5 1/2	36,979	2 3/8	4,925	..	New York, Goole, Furnishing, S.S. "Plover" purchased, Cork.
,, 1878	2,827,052	188,697	7 1/8	43,169	3 5/8	30 6 3/8	29,189	2	579	..	
,, 1879	2,705,625	121,427*	48*	43,093	3 1/4	31 10 1/4	34.959	2 1/8	5.970	..	
Dec., 1879 (50 wks.)	2,645,331	22,774	0 7/8	41,309	3 1/4	31 2 3/4	42,764	2 3/4	8,660	..	Launch of S.S. "Pioneer," Rouen. Goole Forwarding Depôt.
,, 1880	3,339,681	611,282	22 1/8	47,153	3 3/8	28 2 3/4	42,090	2 3/8	10,651	..	Heckmondwike.
,, 1881	3,574,095	234,414	7	51,306	3 3/8	28 8 1/2	46,850	2 5/8	7,672	..	Copenhagen, Purchase of S.S. "Cambrian."
,, 1882	4,038,238	464,143	12 7/8	57,340	3 3/8	28 4 3/4	49.658	2 5/8	3,416	..	Tea and Coffee Department, London.
,, 1883	4,546,889	508,651	12 1/2	66,057	3 3/8	29 0 3/8	47,885	2 5/8	3,176	..	Purchase of S.S. "Unity."
,, 1884 (53 wks.)	4,675,371	41,042	0 7/8	70,343	3 1/2	30 1	54,491	2 3/4	6,431	..	Hamburg, Bristol Depôt, Launch of S.S. "Progress."
,, 1885	4,793,151	203,946	4 3/8	74,305	3 5/8	31 0	77,630	3 3/8	4.454	13,259	
,, 1886	5,223,179	430,028	8 7/8	81,651	3 3/4	31 3 5/8	83,32[illegible]	3 1/8	7,077	15,469	Longton Depôt, Launch of S.S. "Federation."
,, 1887	5,713,235	490,056	9 3/8	93,979	3 5/8	32 10 3/4	65,141	2 1/2	9,408	2,778	Batley, Heckmondwike Currying.

Dec, 1888	6,2c0,074	486,839	8½	105,027	4	33	10½	82,490	2⅞	8,684	6,614	London Cocoa Department, Launch of S.S. "Equity," Batley Clothing.
,, 1889 (53 wks.)	7,028,944	709,638	11⅛	117,849	4	33	6⅜	101,984	3⅜	2,249	16,658	Launch of S.S. "Liberty," Leeds Clothing.
,, 1890	7,429,073	532,750	7⅝	126,879	4	34	1⅞	126,979	3½	..	20,982	Dunston Flour Mill, Aarhus, Leicester New Works.
,, 1891	8,766,430	1,337.357	18	143,151	3⅞	32	7⅞	135,008	3½	1,145	14,702	
,, 1892	9,300,904	534,474	6	165,737	4¼	35	7⅝	98,532	2½	6,511	1,000	Broughton Cabinet Works.
,, 1893	9,526,167	225,263	2⅜	179,910	4½	37	9¾	84,156	2¼	†17,215	7,659	
,, 1894	9.443,938	82,229*	0¾*	186,058	4⅝	39	4¾	126,192	2¾	26,092	..	Montreal, Broughton Clothing Factory.
,, 1895 (53 wks.)	10,141,917	516.365	5¼	199,512	4⅝	39	4⅛	192.7:6	3¾	27,424	10,000	Manchester Printing, Gothenburg, Irlam, Irish Creameries. [Denia.
,, 1896	11,115,056	1,164 496	11⅝	218,393	4⅝	39	3½	177,419	3½	18,045	10,000	W. Hartlepool, Middleton, Roden Estate, Sydney.
,, 1897	11,920,143	805,087	7⅝	246,477	4⅞	41	4¼	135,561	2¾	8,338	..	Littleboro', Manches'r Tobacco Factory.
,, 1898	12,574,748	654,605	5⅜	255,032	4¾	40	6⅜	231,256	3½	31,618	5 000	
,, 1899	14,212,375	1,637,627	13	278,882	4⅝	39	2⅝	2c6,250	4	63,838	..	Rushden Shoe Factory, Silvertown Corn Mill, Herning Bacon Factory, Odense.
,, 1900	16,043,889	1,831,514	12⅞	314,410	4⅝	39	2¼	289,141	4	48,210	..	Tralee Bacon Factory, Roden Convalescent Home, Sydney Oil Works.
,, 1901 (53 wks.)	17,642,c82	1,448,150	8⅞	335,183	4½	37	11⅞	288,321	4	27,210	..	Launch of S.S. "Unity," Pelaw.
,, 1902	18,397,559	1,014,522	5¾	345,855	4½	37	7⅛	336,369	4	51,697	..	Luton Cocoa Works, Launch of S.S. "Fraternity," Leicester Hosiery Fac'y.
,, 1903	19,333,142	935,583	5	354,316	4⅜	36	7¾	297,304	4	4,759	..	Brislington Butter Factory, Huddersfield and Leeds Brush Factories, Marden Fruit Farm, Bury Weaving Shed.
,, 1904	19,809,196	476,054	2⅜	377,606	4½	38	1⅜	332,374	4	37,774	..	
,, 1905	20,785.469	976,273	4⅞	396,767	4½	38	2⅛	304.568	4	†3,591	..	Desboro' Corset Factory Launch of S.S. "New Pioneer" Esbjerg.
,, 1906	22,510,035	1,724,566	8¼	430,862	4½	38	3⅜	410,68c	4	54,766	..	Rochdale Flour, Oldham Star Flour, & M'chester Sun Flour & Provender Mills.
,, 1907 (53 wks.)	24,786,568	2,089,570	9⅞	468,101	4½	37	9⅜	488,571	4	67,479	..	
,, 1908	24,902,842	487,222	1⅞	501,975	4¾	40	3¾	371,497	4	†2,481	..	Birmingham Cycle Depôt, Huthwaite Hosiery Factory (transferred from Leicester), Silvertown Soap Works, Birtley Tinplate Works, Dudley Bucket and Fender Works, Keighley Ironworks.
,, 1909	25,675,938	773,096	3	513,704	4¾	40	0⅜	549,080	4	72,549	..	Dunston Soap Works, Leicester Printing Works, Pontefract Fellmongering.
	384,363,807	..	..	7,094,199	4⅜	36	10⅜	6,163,694	3	‡622,654	‡124 121	

* Decrease. † From. ‡ From Disposal of Profit Account.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Co-operative Union Limited.

PRIOR to 1868, except for the establishment of the C.W.S. for purposes of trade, but little had been done to weld Co-operative activities, which had been spreading all over the kingdom, into one homogeneous whole. But the idea of a national association had been taking shape, largely as the outcome of conferences, more or less sectional in character, which had been held annually usually on Good Fridays in various parts of England and Scotland. In 1868, at a meeting of friends interested in Co-operation, held at the offices of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association in London, it was resolved to convene a Co-operative Congress at London in February, 1869. The response to the appeal which these friends made was poor, and it was not until the Lancashire and Yorkshire Societies took the matter in hand that the scheme became practicable. A few extracts from the circular convening the Congress are of sufficient general interest to find a place here.

* The rapid growth of Co-operation is one of the most remarkable facts in modern history. Originating with the working classes, a system of business has been introduced which, if rightly carried out, promises to change completely the social and industrial aspects of the country, by altering in its very essence the relationship between buyer and seller, employer and employed.

Whether this most important movement shall be so wisely conducted as to achieve a speedy and complete success, with as little disturbance and loss as possible to those interests and persons that are likely to be affected by it, is a question of deep interest to the community, especially to those who, as Co-operators, are practically engaged in working out the change.

Co-operation is spreading everywhere; but its leading principles are not strictly defined, or its higher aims understood.

* "Industrial Co-operation."

The methods of business, in distribution or production, of the different Societies, are not in harmony. Its success in individual cases is doubtful where it might be certain; whilst, where failures and losses occur, they are at once hurtful to those who enter on such experiments, and a grave discouragement to others.

While the success of the movement is no longer doubtful, there are obstacles to be removed, dangers encountered, and higher objects sought, which render counsel necessary among those who have studied the principles of Co-operation, and who have practically engaged themselves in its working.

Then follows an appeal to trade Societies and other working-class bodies.

The subjects set down for discussion help us to understand what were regarded as the problems of that day. Among these were:—

* 1. How best to utilise the organisation of the trades unions for Co-operative purposes.

2. The best means of making Co-operative Societies mutually helpful, *e.g.*,

(*a*) By bringing the productions of Co-operative Societies into the Co-operative and general markets;

(*b*) By instituting a system of guarantee, banking, and labour exchange;

(*c*) By applying Co-operation to agriculture and horticulture;

(*d*) By combining manufactures with agriculture and horticulture;

(*e*) By educational establishments which may be rendered self-supporting by industrial Co-operative enterprise;

(*f*) By forming an organisation of all Co-operative Societies and Co-operators at home and abroad;

(*g*) By seeking an amendment of the law where it is found to hamper Co-operative exertions.

3. What are the chief causes of failure of Co-operative Stores and manufacturing establishments, and what are the fundamental conditions necessary in each case for success?

4. In partnerships of industry, what division of profits, as between capital and labour, is most likely to produce perfectly harmonious action, and, therefore, the largest measure of success? What division is most equitable and what *now* is most practicable?

At this Congress Mr. G. J. Holyoake read a paper in which he advocated a Central Board. Proceeding

* "Industrial Co-operation."

cautiously, the delegates agreed to the formation of a London Board to act in conjunction with the Northern Conference Committee. Four years later, at the Newcastle Congress of 1873, Mr. E. V. Neale read a paper advocating the formation of a Central Co-operative Board to consist of five sections—the Southern, Midland, North-Western, Northern, and Scottish—and the formation of a United Board composed of representatives from each section, which, subject to Congress, should be the governing authority of the Central Board.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNION.*

Since 1873 the organisation of the Central Board has been altered in form from time to time as the result of experience and to meet fresh needs, and in 1889 the Board was reconstituted and registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act as "The Co-operative Union Limited," under which name it has since carried on the work of organising the Co-operative movement. As stated in its constitution: The Union is founded to promote the practice of truthfulness, justice, and economy in production and exchange—

1. By the abolition of all false dealings, either (*a*) *direct*, by representing any article produced or sold to be other than what it is known to the producer or vendor to be; or (*b*) *indirect*, by concealing from the purchaser any fact known to the vendor material to be known by the purchaser, to enable him to judge of the value of the article purchased.

2. By conciliating the conflicting interests of the capitalist, the worker, and the purchaser, through the equitable division among them of the fund commonly known as *profit*.

3. By preventing the waste of labour now caused by unregulated competition.

RULES OF ADMISSION.

Each Society applying for admission to the Union is deemed by such application to accept the principles above stated as the basis of all its business transactions, and no Society is admitted into the Union unless its management is of a representative character. Thus the Union is vested with the safe keeping of what may be termed the ethical conscience and character of the movement, which finds expression in the well-known Co-operative motto, "Each for All, and All for Each."

* "Industrial Co-operation."

Every member of the Union must hold one transferable share, of the nominal value of 5s., which does not carry interest or dividend.

Every Society must, so long as it continues a member of the Union, contribute annually to its support as follows:—

(*a*) If the number of members of the Society is less than 1,000, then the sum of 2d. per member.

(*b*) If such number exceeds 1,000, then, at least, the sum of 2,000 pence.

(*c*) This contribution entitles the Society to one vote for every 500 members for whom it has subscribed, and to send delegates to Congress in the same proportion.

At the commencement of 1910 the Union consisted of 1,267 Societies, with a membership of 2,447,821. There were 294 Societies, with 137,472 individual members, which had not joined the Union.

DETAIL ORGANISATION.

For purposes of Co-operative organisation the United Kingdom is divided up into seven geographical areas, called sections. Each of these sections has its own Sectional Board, elected annually by the Societies within the area covered by the respective sections, in such manner as they themselves determine. The seven Sectional Boards together constitute the Central Board, which is the governing body of the Union.

The following table shows the number and distribution of the Central Board, and the method of election:—

Section.	Number of Members.	How Elected.
Midland	11	By the whole Section.
Northern	7	,, Districts.
North-Western	20	,, Districts, except four Sectional representatives.
Scottish	10	,, whole Section.
Southern	9	,, ,, ,,
South-Western	5	,, ,, ,,
Western	5	,, ,, ,,
Total Central Board.	67	

Each of the Sectional Boards is responsible for the guidance of all Societies within its own area. The Central

Board meet but twice a year—once immediately after election to decide its general policy for the year, and once just before Congress to consider its report to Congress. The United Board, composed, as recommended by Mr. E. V. Neale in 1873, of representatives from the sections, or, properly speaking, Sectional Boards, is the executive of the Union, besides which there are several Sub-Committees.

It is not generally known how large has been the Union's share in building up the Co-operative movement. The greater part of the legal advantages enjoyed by Co-operators originated in the action of the Central Board of the Union. They have been summarised as follows:—

* 1. The right to deal with the public instead of their own members only.

2. The incorporation of the Societies, by which they have acquired the right of holding in their own name lands or buildings and property generally, and of suing and being sued in their own names, instead of being driven to employ trustees.

3. The power to hold £200 instead of £100 by individual members of Societies.

4. The limitation of the liability of members for the debts of the Society to the sum unpaid upon the shares standing to their credit.

5. The exemption of Societies from charge to income tax on the profits of their business, under the condition that the number of their shares shall not be limited.

6. The bestowal of power on one registered Society to hold shares in its own corporate name to any amount in the capital of another registered Society.

7. The extension of the power of members of Societies to bequeath shares by nomination in a book, without the formality of a will or the necessity of appointing executors, first from £30 to £50, and now to £100, by the Provident Nominations and Small Intestacies Act, 1883, which also makes this power apply to loans and deposits as well as to shares.

8. The Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1871, which enabled Societies to hold and deal with land freely.

9. The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, 1876 and 1893, which consolidated into one Act the laws relating to these Societies, and, among many smaller advantages too numerous to be mentioned in detail, gave them the right of carrying on banking business whenever they offer to the depositors the security of transferable share capital.

Primarily, of course, the work of the Co-operative Union is propaganda, but it by no means stops at that. As a registered Society, it does some business as a publisher of Co-operative literature and seller of books; but, more important still, it acts as general adviser, legal and otherwise, to the Co-operative world. During the past twenty-five years the Co-operative Union has rendered many services to the Co-operators of Bristol. Reference is made to a few of these in the detailed histories of the Societies, but only a few. The true value of the Union is incalculable. Without such an institution there is no movement, only a number of separate and distinct Societies, upon each of whom it would be possible for alien forces to wage warfare in detail. Moreover, the existence of such a body indicates that for Co-operators there is an ideal inseparable from the true life of the movement, which transcends the merely equitable production and distribution of wares—that which teaches the highest duty of man is to be found in the service of man, and the supremest good, the common weal.

Through its Parliamentary Committee close attention is paid to legislative proposals in order not only that Co-operators may be protected from the attacks of their enemies, but also that, when occasion requires, representations may be made to bring trading regulations into harmony with Co-operative ideals. In one instance it was actually proposed by the Traders' Defence Association to promote a Bill in Parliament by which "income tax should be levied upon Co-operative Societies as units without rebate to the individual members or shareholders thereof." In such matters as these the Co-operative Union has ever been vigilant.

On another occasion it was found necessary to approach the Government of the day to claim freedom of action for

civil servants who were Co-operators, and it had the satisfaction of securing an Order in Council which permitted Government employés liberty, when off duty, to promote Co-operative enterprise. Similar action has had to be taken in at least two instances with railway companies in respect to their employés. In one of these cases, the company proving obstinate, the carrying trade of the movement was, at the suggestion of the Co-operative Union, withdrawn, and in less than three months—outwardly, at any rate—interference with personal liberty on this question ceased. The Union has also, as representing an important section of organised trade, been of service to the Government when questions such as shop hours and food and drug sale regulations were under discussion. Upon its own initiative in 1890–91 the Co-operative Union proposed more stringent inspection in respect to such matters, such action being quite in accord with the highest Co-operative traditions.

The Co-operative movement is frequently taunted with having corrupt officials, and without doubt there have been cases which give colour to the charge, though the complaint comes ill from those who are mainly interested in playing upon the human weakness of those whom they tempt. The movement, as represented in its Union, repudiated the charge as applied to itself, and hailed with satisfaction a Secret Commissions Bill, promoted in 1899, embodying their sense of its fitness in a resolution conveyed to the Lord Chief Justice.

Not only in legislative matters have the interests of Co-operators been safeguarded by the Co-operative Union, but in administrative affairs as well. The experience of one Society, whether for good or ill, has served as an object lesson to all. From time to time circulars have been issued from the head office to all Societies, now pointing to the necessity for properly stamping all receipts, then suggestions for the prevention of fraud, and, again, pointing to the dangers which seemed to menace the movement. These last two circulars, issued in 1899 and 1904 respectively, contained matter

which it is imperative for every Co-operator to thoroughly comprehend. Among the suggestions were:—

1. At least once a year a full list of members' accounts should be published, to be identified by the members' pass book number and not by name.

2. Withdrawals of share capital should be paid to the member personally, and to no other person, except such person produces an authority signed by the member authorising payment to be made to him.

3. Wherever possible, only such persons should be employed as Auditors as hold the Audit Certificate of the Co-operative Union, or are otherwise professionally qualified.

Attention was also called to the necessity of avoiding—

(*a*) Acceptance of loans contrary to the Society's rules.

(*b*) Manipulation of figures in order to produce a favourable balance sheet.

(*c*) Incapable auditing.

(*d*) Appointment of officials without sufficient regard to references.

(*e*) Overlapping of one Society by another.

The Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1893 owes much of its efficiency to the officials of the Co-operative Union; and it is due to the Union that in 1899 the Railway Clearing House granted facilities for delegates attending Co-operative Conferences to travel at fare and a quarter rate.

Upon occasions the Co-operative Union has organised funds for helping Societies which have fallen upon evil days, or for the sufferers from some industrial calamity. No less than £1,250 was collected and distributed thus during the Welsh coal strike of 1899.

This somewhat diffuse record must not close without reference to the prompt and practical steps taken in 1904 to meet the unscrupulous tactics of the Traders' Defence Association, which organised a campaign against the movement in selected towns. By invitation, 692 Societies guaranteed a defence fund of over £100,000 within the space of a few weeks, but it was not found necessary to

make calls of more than 2 per cent upon the fund. The spontaneous and hearty response to the Union's invitation, as well as the vigour with which the officials of the Union met the attack, undoubtedly had much to do with combating this crusade agginst English Co-operators.

One of the first practical effects of the establishment of the Union was the arrangement of a set of model rules embodying all provisions required by Act of Parliament, and also those provisions which matured experience had shown were necessary. The model rules were adopted by each Bristol Society in turn, supplemented by such special rules as local conditions demanded.

At the outset of their career, Bristol Co-operative Societies of the later period realised the advantages of the Co-operative Union, not merely in respect to propaganda, but in this more prosaic but necessary advice in respect to the formulating of rules.

When the Bedminster and Bristol and District Societies commenced, the Western Section included the whole of South and Mid-Wales, together with the counties of Gloucester, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall; the English centres being represented by Messrs. J. Clay and R. Warne (Gloucester), J. Langley (Radstock), and J. Young (Plymouth). Obviously, representatives selected from such a wide area would, under any circumstances, have to spend a considerable time in travelling to any given point to meet with their colleagues; moreover, Sectional Conferences could only be maintained with extreme difficulty owing to the same cause. The question of dividing the section was constantly debated from 1888 onwards, very practical proposals being put forward in 1889 by Mr. R. H. Tutt (Plymouth) in a paper which he read at Newport. He therein strongly advocated the formation of an entirely Welsh Section, the Western Section to consist of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and Gloucester, with Wiltshire and Dorset taken from the Southern Section. The proposals were considered by the United Board, and referred back for reconsideration by



A. E. Bullock,
First Treasurer S.W. Section.



John Hopkins,
First Chairman S.W. Section.

the sections. Eventually, in 1895, a compromise was arrived at, by which the Western Section was divided at Bristol, and all Societies west of that city included in a new section—the South-Western. Owing, however, to Bedminster being in Somerset, and Bristol and District in Gloucestershire, the former became included in the new section, while the latter remained in the old. At this period the leaders of the Bristol and District Society did not concern themselves much with Co-operative affairs outside their own; but, on the other hand, those of Bedminster did, and really had a great deal to do with the alteration of sections.*

Mr. J. F. Hopkins, who was Secretary at the time, was put forward as a candidate for one of the representatives to the new section, and was elected. He was appointed Chairman, and held this office until 1898, when he retired, his place being filled by Mr. T. Gidley (Plymouth), Mr. A. Bullock being elected to serve on the Board from Bedminster. He was appointed Treasurer to the Board; and upon the death of Mr. G. Hallett (Menheniot), which took place in November, 1902, he was appointed Secretary, which post he has held with credit and honour ever since.

Once a year the Co-operative Union calls the whole of its members together (*a*) to render an account of its stewardship, and (*b*) to discuss matters of interest to the movement. This Annual Co-operative Congress, which is held during Whitsuntide, plays a most important part in the fashioning of ideals for the movement. It has sometimes been decried by reason of the apparent futility of its deliberations, for it has no power to enforce its resolutions upon any Society; but this is to take a singularly narrow view of those things which operate towards the perfecting of Co-operative sentiment. Congress, as a rule, reflects the high-water mark of possible achievement, and an ideal, once formulated, can never be lost in its entirety.

* Since the amalgamation, Bristol, by consent of Congress, has been classified in the S.W. Section.

In 1893 Congress came to Bristol, and held its sittings in the Hall of the Y.M.C.A., St. James' Square. The Colston Hall or the Prince's Theatre would have had to be requisitioned had a similar compliment been paid to the city in 1910, so vast has this gathering become during the past decade. The Bristol Congress will always remain associated with the name of Mr. Wm. Maxwell on account of his outspoken criticism of Co-operative labour conditions. The movement which he initiated then towards higher standards has never been permitted to flag; one by one the barriers of prejudice and greed have been swept aside, with this result, that the Co-operative movement of to-day stands for definite minimum conditions based upon ethical rather than commercial considerations—conditions which are but the culmination of Mr. Maxwell's sentiments expressed at Bristol in 1893. Elsewhere it is shown what the effect has been in Bristol, which, it is a pleasure to record, is in the van. There are, unfortunately, Societies which still lag behind in this respect, but the pressure of enlightened Co-operative opinion is bound to take effect eventually. The keynote of Mr. Maxwell's paper is to be found in a single sentence:—

> So surely shall we fail in our great work of amelioration of the masses if we cannot bend this hard law of supply and demand by what Ruskin calls "social affection."

In passing, it is interesting to note that a question put by Miss Catherine Webb, "Why should women's labour be cheaper than men's?" totally ignored in 1893, has become a burning question in the Co-operative world of 1910.

The immediate result of Mr. Maxwell's appeal was the formation of the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employés, now one of the strongest trade unions in the country. It is worth noting, however, that the suggestion of a Co-operative employés' trade union had been made nearly nine years previously by Mr. Ben Jones, then Manager of the London Branch of the C.W.S. Speaking on August 20th, 1884, he strongly recommended the formation of an organised association of employés all

over the country, after the manner of the trade unions. He said they should have a union of this kind among themselves for all sorts of good purposes.

The question of treatment of employés was bound to bring up the ever-green subject of profit-sharing, and the old veteran, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, was too much in earnest over the matter to let slip any opportunity. "Standing orders" were suspended to give him a chance to move

That we reaffirm the principle of copartnership of labour as an essential of Industrial Co-operation, and as the best mode to adopt to create a greater interest by the employés of the movement in its work and advancement; that we congratulate the Scottish Wholesale Society upon their new departure in this direction, and earnestly urge upon the English Wholesale and other federal bodies to adopt a measure equally generous towards their employés.

In characteristic vein the G.O.M. of Co-operation pleaded for a system of profit-sharing in the workshops of the C.W.S., and he had the support of most of the delegates who spoke, but only in an academic sense. An amendment confirming the principle, but simply calling upon federal bodies to be generous in the matter, was eventually carried almost unanimously.

Other matters dealt with at this Congress were the question of overlapping and the relation of Co-operation to other movements, both of which have had their peculiar significance for Bristol. In respect to the latter subject, one cannot but be struck with the great foresight and broad toleration of Mr. R. H. Tutt, then a member of the Western Sectional Board. Writing in his paper with reference to Co-operation and Socialists he said:—

It is to Socialism that modern thought is tending; it is Socialism that is engaging the attention of the philosopher and the philanthropist, the politician and the divine; encouragement should, therefore, be given to any means that may be offered for an interchange of opinions between Co-operators and Socialists.

Mr. Tutt likened the difference between Socialism and Co-operation as between equality and equity, revolution and evolution; and it says much for his breadth of view that, notwithstanding these fundamental differences existing in his mind, he was able to express himself as indicated above.

The discussion of these topics made a profound impression upon the people of Bristol, and had the effect of turning the tide of fortune from ebb to flow in the case of at least one Society.

The Chairman of the first day, the late Mr. George Hawkins, J.P. (Oxford), opened the proceedings with a most practical address, calling for unity amongst the various sections of Co-operators, and appealing for more insistence upon the ideals of the movement, hoping

> That Bristol may witness the dawn of a better and wiser day in the consideration of vexed problems, that we may learn in the carrying out of our programme—divided as it may be—that, though all things may be lawful, all things may not be expedient, and that we may lay to heart the necessity of bearing and forbearing. That the suicidal cry of " parting of the ways " may no more be heard, but that, on the contrary, we may be constrained to gird up our loins more efficiently to carry on the warfare against injustice, poverty, and the many evils that Co-operation claims to be able to conquer.

The Bristol Congress will be remembered, too, for the inauguration of a scheme for establishing Stores in London under the guidance of the C.W.S., a scheme which, through faults inherent in its constitution, never bore satisfactory fruit.

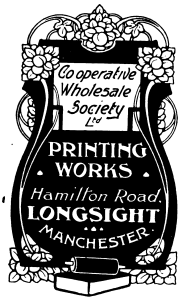
Though less than twenty years since, a large number of those who took a leading part in the debates of that Congress have gone from our midst. They were the remnants of the " Old Guard," and Bristol was fortunate in having had their inspiring presence. Mr. G. J. Holyoake has already been referred to, but there was also Judge Hughes, the friend of Kingsley and Maurice; Mr. E. T. Craig, the founder of Ralahine and disciple of Robert Owen; Mr. J. T. W. Mitchell, the genial and robust Chairman of the C.W.S. for twenty-one years. That idealist of the Productive Federation, Mr. Thomas Blandford, too, was there; Mr. George Hawkins, the bluff, cheery optimist of Oxford, the ready Chairman of Co-operative meetings by the score, who presided on the first day; Mr. Joseph Clay (Gloucester), the genial, warm-hearted friend of the poor, on the second; and Mr

William Henry Brown (Newport), respected and honoured at home and in the provinces, on the third; these have gone from us. Mrs. Ben Jones, a well-respected and much-beloved champion of the women's cause, was also there. Coming nearer home, Mr. Gilmore Barnett, who stood four-square for Bristol Co-operation in its early days of trial; Mr. John Brown and Mr. J. F. Hopkins, of Bristol and District and Bedminster Societies respectively. During the previous year death had taken another of the pioneers—one of the best; and one of the duties of Congress was to pay its tribute to the memory of Mr. E. V. Neale, the inspiration and guide of these annual meetings for so many years. Amongst others who took part in this memorable Congress, and who are still working amongst us in one sphere or another, were Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, Mr. Tom Mann, Mr. Ben Tillett, the Rev. T. G. Gardner, and Mr. H. Vivian.

The report of the Western Sectional Board to the Congress of 1893 declares that one of the satisfactory doings of the year had been the establishment of the Bristol and Somerset District Association. This was by no means a new idea in 1893, for in 1884 a proposal was made to start a Western Co-operative Guild, which crystallised in 1887, the Congress report of 1888 referring to such an organisation having been set on foot. The Guild does not appear to have had a practical existence, and district propaganda really dates from the establishment of the Bristol and Somerset Association on September 27th, 1891. Mr. G. Hallett, then Secretary of the Sectional Educational Association, read a paper before a Conference of Societies in Bristol, in which he urged the necessity for forming such an association. The matter was not allowed to drop; energetic friends, both in the Bristol and District and Bedminster Societies, discussed the *pros* and *cons*; further Conferences were held in May and July, 1892. At the latter Mr. Hopkins read a paper upon district organisation, as a consequence of which visits were made to various Societies, and by the Congress of 1893 twelve Societies had agreed to become members of the association. This organisation has acted

as a valuable auxiliary to the Co-operative Union, disseminating information and stimulating zeal among existing Societies, besides bringing new ones into existence and standing by them in their first days. The Conferences and meetings it has promoted in various towns have drawn Co-operators from all parts of Somerset into a closer fellowship, and not the least of the results of that growing kinship has been the amalgamation of the four Bristol Societies.




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